Encounter

A Writer's Problems

Eugène Ionesco

Julius Gould
Marcuse's Theory

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Trial of a Poet

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Theatre

Goronwy Rees
A Visa for Kafka

John Mander
Beyond the Wall

George Mikes
Alien's Return

Peter Porter
Poem

Christopher Isherwood
The Class on the Campus

edited by
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September 1964 **132**

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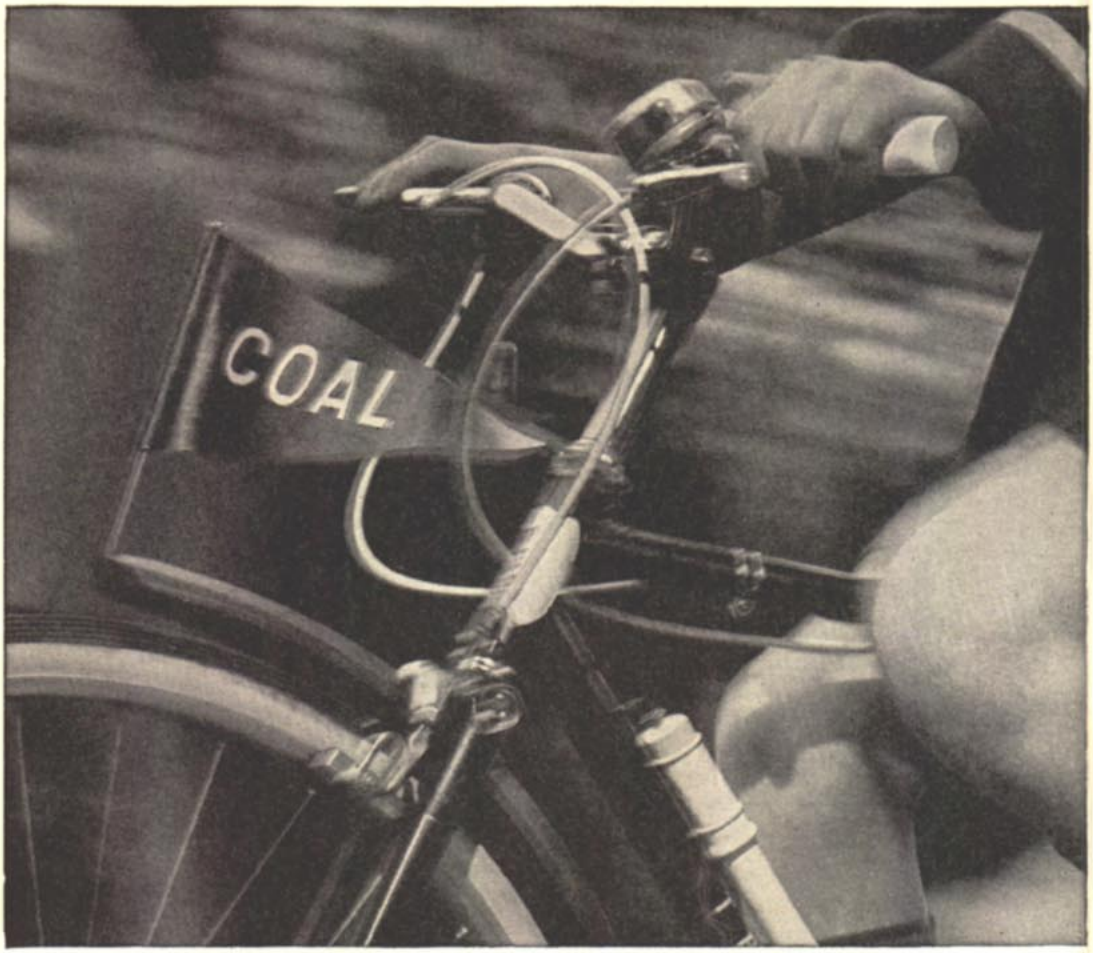

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Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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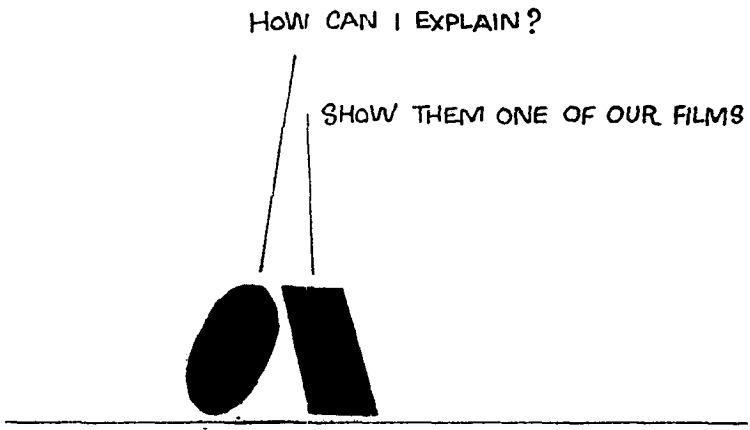

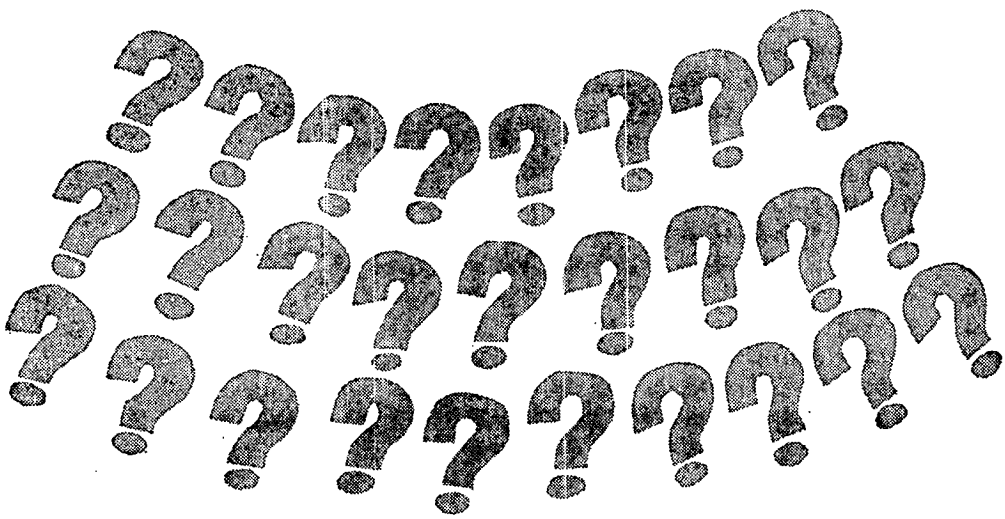

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Eugène Ionesco

The Writer and His Problems

"WHY DO YOU write?" is a question often put to authors. "You ought to know," might be the author's reply to the people asking the question.

"You ought to know, because you read our writings, and if you read them, and go on doing so, the explanation must be that you have found something valid in them, some form of nourishment, something which corresponds to your need. Why, may I ask, do you feel this need, and what sort of nourishment do we supply? I may be a writer, but why are you my reader? The answer to the question you are putting to me is to be found within yourself." The reader or the theatre-goer will reply, broadly speaking, that he reads or goes to see a play for instruction or entertainment.

On the whole, these are the two possible kinds of answer. Instruction means learning what the writer stands for and what he has written; or the more modest reader will perhaps say that he is looking for answers to questions to which he himself is unable to reply. The reader looking for entertainment, *i.e.*, who wants to forget the worries of his daily life and delight in the beauty of the book he is reading or the play he is watching, will accuse you of being boring if he thinks you are trying to give instruction or put across a moral lesson. The seeker after instruction may, if he thinks you are trying to amuse or entertain him at his expense, accuse you of not supplying answers to all the problems that he himself cannot solve. As soon as someone has written a sonnet, a light comedy, a song, a novel, or a tragedy, journalists rush to ask what the author of the song or the tragedy thinks of Socialism, Capitalism, Good, Evil, mathematics, space-travel, the quantum theory, love, football, cookery, and the Head of State.

"What is your conception of life and death?" a South American journalist once asked me as I was coming down the gangway from the boat with a suitcase in each hand. I put down my suitcases, wiped the perspiration from my brow, and asked him to grant me twenty years to think of a reply, which I did not guarantee I should be able to supply even then. "That is precisely the question I put to myself," I said to him, "and I write in order to put it to myself." I picked up my suitcases again, with the feeling that I must have disappointed him. Not everyone has the key to the universe in his pocket or his suitcase. If a writer or author asked me why I read or go to the theatre, I should reply that I do so not to obtain answers but to discover more questions; not to acquire knowledge but, quite simply, to become acquainted with the something or someone that is the work. My curiosity for knowledge looks to learning and science for satisfaction. The curiosity which takes me to the theatre, to the art-gallery or to the literary section in a bookshop is quite different in nature. I am moved by the desire to get to know the features and heart of someone I may like or dislike.

The writer is embarrassed by the questions put to him because he puts them to himself, along with many others, and because he also suspects that there are still other questions that he might put to himself and will never manage to do so; still less will he manage to answer them.

EVERYONE—the writer included—when he is alone, far from journalists and recruiting sergeants, is free to breathe. Sometimes he asks himself why he breathes, sometimes he doesn't. Whether or not he puts the question to himself, he cannot prevent himself breathing. Not only does the writer breathe; since he is a writer, he also writes. Only after he has begun to write

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does he begin questioning himself about the purpose and reasons behind what he is doing. And so he asks, as he talks to himself (while carrying on with his work, like a cabinet-maker, assembling the materials needed for the making of a cupboard and thinking of his private worries or about the nature of cupboards and yet not being distracted by his worries from the making of the cupboard): Why do I write?[1] What does the activity correspond to? Have I something more to say than other people? Am I trying to assert myself, that is, justify my existence? Is it because I am afraid of death and want to go on living in others after my physical decease? Is it to save the world? Is it to save myself? Is it to praise God or glorify the universe? Is it to try and elucidate myself, explore, understand or explain myself? Is it because I do not understand myself and am asking others to supply me with explanations? Is it because I feel lonely and want to break out of my solitude and communicate or fraternise with my fellow men? Could all the reasons I have just enumerated be false? Can it be that different, hidden reasons are inciting me to do something which has no connection with the apparent reasons, the latter being only a veil, drawn deliberately or unconsciously, over the deeper cause? Is it because I want to understand the world and, for my own satisfaction at least, bring a little order into its immense chaos—writing and artistic endeavour being a form of thought in movement? Or is it simply that creation is an instinctive, extra-conscious necessity—imagining, inventing, discovering, creating being functions as natural as breathing? Is it a form of play, and if so, what is the meaning of this play-activity?

Is THE AUTHOR HIMSELF fully aware of what he is doing? My impression is that he himself is deceived. He has certain conscious intentions, of course; for instance, he may set out to prove something, and imagine that what he is trying to prove is the essential part of his work. Then he, or someone else, notices that the fiction he has created is more important than what he took to be the essential thing. The point he was trying to prove is of no interest; what is interesting is the way in which he was trying to prove it, that is, his construction. Perhaps the author's only aim is to construct a kind of edifice which will embody and illustrate the laws of literary or theatrical construction, in the same way as a builder, in the last resort, merely illustrates, and gives material expression to, the laws of architecture. The disused church, which is no longer a place of worship, may become a hospital or a police-station, or it may be left standing empty, but it still remains essentially itself, a building, a piece of architecture, and not a church; as a matter of fact, it never was a church; it was used as a church, just as a poetic or dramatic work may be used, temporarily, as an instrument of propaganda, or education, or political re-education, etc. The powers that be may use it for whatever purpose they please; they cannot stop it being what it is, a living construction, a created work. It happens that a writer's work is crammed with problems, intentions and assumptions of every kind and contains criticisms of society and of the state of mankind. Also, the author may have thought he was not dealing with himself, and yet he discovers himself in his work. And the essential quality of the work will lie precisely in the unconscious confessions it contains. These confessions themselves will be given contradictory interpretations, of course, and falsified. They may be used against the author, but that is another matter.

I know that all these questions have already been formulated, that philosophers, theologians, psychologists and sociologists have striven to answer them and that they have been dealt with in thousands of books.

I THINK that all the reasons I have put forward are both false and true. True, if we accept them all, and false if we only accept one of them, or a few. It would require some time—but I do not think I should find the operation too difficult—to take one or other of these reasons and defend it, by basing it on a philosophy, or on some theory or other, or on a bibliography. I am also aware of the risk I am running in trying to deal with the problem on my own. What I have to say has already been said and the evidence I have to

[1] There are works which consist wholly of reflections or questionings about themselves, *e.g.* the poems of Mallarmé, Valéry, etc. However, it seems to me that the work's self-questionings become detached from it and from the questioning poet and become materials to be used, on the same level as any others, in the work that is being created, *i.e.* constituent elements of the "monument" which is its structure.

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offer may contain nothing new or interesting. So much the worse for me, and for you.

I am compelled to write by all sorts of things, the most contradictory or complementary impulses: pride, the will to power, hatred, the desire to redeem myself, love, anguish, yearning, dismay, confidence, a lack of confidence, the certainty of being in the right, a lack of certainty, an ardent desire to be enlightened and to enlighten, amusement (but if it is myself I am amusing, why does writing give me such trouble and cause me such insurmountable fatigue?), and humility. It seems to me that all this is present and in evidence in works of literature, which express it better than the author can himself when he talks about it.

Perhaps one should refrain from writing. But this possibility opens up a different problem; whether to act or not to act, whether to live or not to live, whether or not to do anything, because, as we all know, writing is a form of action.

Is my voice that of a single individual? Is what I invent or think I am inventing, what I describe, discover, or think I have discovered, arbitrary? Do people need me or my work? Do people need anyone? Am I responding to a demand or thrusting myself upon the public? If the latter, what right have I to do so? Might anybody else have been in my position? It is obvious that the writer is interpreted, judged, accepted or rejected, that he is a performer in the concert and that the concert is in progress. His existence is taken into account, if only for the purpose of denying what he says. Nothing can be denied unless it already exists. The writer says to himself: so, I find myself with other people; if I am with others, this must mean that I am others, as well as myself, that other people speak with my voice, that I am other people more than I am myself. But what does being oneself mean? Am I simply a meeting-point, a junction, where various forces unite or come into conflict? Or am I unique, and is this why I cause surprise and why I am led to the objective conclusion that I arouse interest? Or may both possibilities be true at once? But that again is a different problem. What is "being oneself"? Is this self, which exists, absolute or relative? The "I" (which thinks, of course), my identity... is not definable by me; the thoughts which I take to be my own may be determined by others. Are we, all of us, interchangeable or irreplaceable? Whether the answer is one or the other or both, the fact seems to provide the author with sufficient justification for existing and for saying, or trying to say, something.

This reflection removes the embarrassment he might feel at being what he is; if writing and engaging in activity is a manifestation of pride, the refusal to write, to be active, to do things, may also be an effect of pride.

To begin with, I must confess personally that neither theology nor philosophy have enabled me to understand why I exist. Nor have they convinced me that we are obliged to make anything of our existence or that we should, or can, give it a meaning. I feel that I do not altogether belong to this world. I do not know to whom the world ought to belong, and yet I should not hand over the world, or myself, to anyone. If I feel ever so slightly at home here, this is because, merely by existing, I have got into the habit of being here. My impression is, rather, that I belong elsewhere. If I knew where, everything would be much better, but I do not see how the question can be answered. The fact that one is filled with an incomprehensible yearning would seem to be a sign that there is an elsewhere. This elsewhere may, so to speak, be a "here" that I am unable to rediscover; or perhaps what I am looking for is not here. Some people have given an answer, or thought they could, and supplied a solution. I am pleased for their sakes and offer them my congratulations. For my own part, I merely note that I—the "I" which is so difficult to define—am here, and that I write in order to

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express, to communicate, my astonishment and my yearning. At least that point is definite. As I walk through the streets of Paris or travel across the world, I take my astonishment and yearning with me. It seems to me that I have no points of reference; at other times, I imagine I have. But they appear unstable and shifting and eventually vanish again.

You must have noticed, obviously, that I am already involved in a contradiction. Is this because I have been unable to bring order into this contradiction, or into contradictions in general? Is it because we live on several levels of consciousness which contradict each other? Again, I believe that both possibilities are true. From time to time, I think I believe something, I think I am thinking, I take sides, I make a choice, I fight, and when I do this, I do it vehemently and stubbornly. But always within me there is a voice which goes on saying that my choice, my vehemence, my affirmativeness have no sure or absolute basis; that I ought to abandon them. I do not possess the necessary wisdom to link my acts to my deep-rooted uncertainty. Why am I saying all this? Everyone puts these questions to himself when he is alone. It is in this state of confusion that the writer writes. And that is a second point definitely established, as the reader will have realised.

I SHOULD also like to make a further point plain: I am not making a profession of scepticism or non-scepticism. I am not arguing about the problem of necessity and the value of choice. Some people may say that my profound uncertainty is to be explained historically, that I belong to such and such a class, or that I am determined, or made indeterminate, by diverse and contradictory tendencies or traditions, which may, or may not be, explained historically, dialectically, etc. I repeat that there are moments when I make a choice or take sides, unless I merely have the illusion of choosing and taking sides. I am simply trying here to expound what is deep down within me; I am expounding and exposing myself at the same time. I am yielding to impulses, or rather I am opposing other people's impulses. Like everyone else, or at least most people, I have a tendency to oppose what is proposed to me or presented in the form of an assertion. I see the negative or mistaken elements in other people's assertions. What right have I to think that something is mistaken or not mistaken? As I say, I choose, I affirm and I deny, in the little things of life. I state that black is a colour I dislike and that I prefer blue. It might be possible to discover the reasons why I prefer this to that, but the effort would take too long. I also prefer Balzac to Eugene Sue, and Shakespeare to Feydeau. It follows that I have certain criteria, and they are literary ones.

Broadly speaking, if I prefer Shakespeare to Feydeau, it is because Shakespeare's world seems to me richer, more complex, more universally human, more profound and truer than Feydeau's. But what do I find in Shakespeare that goes beyond Feydeau? Precisely Shakespeare's sound and fury, his richer questionings which I do not find in the French comic writer. Both my chaos and my bewilderment are missing from Feydeau. What I recognise in Shakespeare is not answers but questions and events, together with a number of notations or self-evident truths. No final solutions. This is why I say that to ask oneself a question without supplying an answer is truer than not asking oneself questions at all.

I also notice that in the books I happen to read, the answers never fully reply to the questions and that all the problems seem to be given false solutions. All dogmatisms are provisional. Not only do they seem provisional to me, I also have the impression that they are nothing but a system of hypotheses, suppositions or ways of looking at things, which can always be replaced by other ideologies or abstract conceptions. We explain things to ourselves as best we can. Ideologies, with the help of a little auto-suggestion, can always seem to be confirmed by the facts, although the opposite ideologies prove that the first are refuted by the facts. Everyone ought to compose his little Cartesian Discourse on Method for his own use. This is very exhausting. *I am*: but who is this "I"? As has already been pointed out, it is hard to say. It is a convention but, at any rate, a less vague one than "we" or "people."

HOWEVER, THERE IS SOMETHING. There are things. Things can be used; things can be used to do other things—working, doing, writing. I can do things, I can write. Buildings are erected, machines carry us from one place to another, etc. This is all I can know of a slightly more definite nature. Calculations can be made; that is, putting it at its simplest, we can move, or stay where we are, or handle

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objects. I also know that everything that is and is being done or made, everything that seems to us to exist or to be being done or made, has not always existed, and that what is being made will eventually be unmade. This plum-tree is not a cherry-tree, but who knows if it might not become one as a result of careful grafting? And this plum-tree will one day be an ex-plum-tree; nothing. Before, perhaps, changing into all sorts of other things; transmutations cannot be excluded from our thought. And when this plum-tree has ceased to exist, no-one will be able to guarantee that it ever existed. I have appetites and desires, and I do not know the reasons for these appetites and desires; I have the impression that if one could trace them to their sources and eventually understand their whys and their wherefores—as may well be possible—desires, impulses, appetites, fears, love and hatred would vanish.

My impression is that there is no reason for anything and that we are driven on by some incomprehensible force. Nothing has any reason. Everything within oneself is debatable; that which is external (or what we call "external"), whether facts or objects, is irrefutable. Irrefutable and, for me, devoid of any reason for existing, or not existing.

MY OWN EXPLANATIONS of my activity seem to be incomplete or false or shaky. Being unaware of the purpose of life, I am not quite sure either why I write. Yet I have always been a writer, just as I have always been alive for as long as I can remember—and wondering about the meaning of life. I am impelled to write, that is, to ask myself questions and to look around me and to describe what I see. But, as I write, the denouncing of what appears evil, the criticising and parodying of others and their behaviour, moralising—all this often seems to me to make sense only within a very narrow context. And when I take sides, I always wonder why I am doing so, and think I ought not to be doing so. My prejudices and convictions are determined by spontaneous feelings, the validity of which is hardly within the reach of verification, even if they can be translated into fairly clear thoughts; in fact, more interesting than thought itself would be the knowledge why one thinks the thoughts one does think. I believe myself to be more genuine in those of my works which express astonishment and bewildered dismay. The roots of life strike down into this astonishment. In the ultimate depths of my being, what I find is darkness—or rather, a blinding light.

BUT ALL QUESTIONS, whether simple or complex, naïve or subtle, are however only starting points or primary impulses, which are quickly left behind. They allow us to begin on a journey, to undertake an exploration; we do not know what we may find. Didactic authors know their itinerary in advance. They will have nothing to discover. Their journey is not really necessary, because in fact they are recounting other people's journeys and discoveries. They are dealing with the already known, the ready-made. Such writers have no contribution to make; they are supernumerary; they cannot communicate their experience to us because they have none. Normally, questions come before answers. The didactic or political writer imposes certain answers before he poses the questions, but live answers cannot be obtained in this way. By putting the question, we may, or may not, arrive at an answer. But in literature, it is not the finding of an answer or the failure to find one that counts. That which asks questions and gives them an answer and that which asks questions without answering them both count equally as beings or entities. For a work is a living being, or a live world, and it is the fact of being this live—that is, true—world, which is important. I shall return to this idea later.

At any rate, the anguish or the serenity, the bewilderment or the certainty embodied in the work will, in the last resort, be only the living, throbbing materials which go to make it; they will be members of an organism. This is what constitutes their value, and the value, the truth of the work. A work—a play, for instance—is not a questionnaire with questions and answers: the real answers in a work of art lie, quite simply, in that which replies to the work itself; it is the work which replies to itself, as a symphony answers itself or as a patch of colour answers another patch of colour in the same picture. In the theatre, these questions and answers are players in a game; theatre, in fact, is playing at something; and the importance of the work will depend on the density of the questions which have taken living shape, on their complexity, their truth, their authenticity—their truth as living creatures, of course, which is not the external, and always debatable, truth of demonstration.

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So, to write literary works: novels, short-stories, poems, memoirs, essays, scenarios or plays, the one simple requirement is sincerity. The sincere voice rings out and can be heard; in other words, sincerity has a strong voice. But although you may be heard, this does not necessarily mean that you will be listened to. On the contrary, at least in the beginning. When you say something true, that is, something you have felt and experienced, people don't believe you, they don't want to believe you. Or it may happen, sometimes, that the truth seems inexpressive, empty or ordinary; the true perception is not grasped, it is blinding; people cannot see it as yet, they will only see it later. That which is true with the truth of genuineness, that which is true seems out of the way, unusual. It is unusual. Falsehood is banal. The fact that you are called a liar is a sign that you are sincere; since you are honest, you are called a phoney. Your outburst has torn a gap in the fabric of collective mental habits. What was true yesterday, what used to be an intellectual discovery, has been superseded, but the social and psychological crystallisation is such as to maintain firmly in place, in the form of a desiccated tradition, truths which are no more than petrified conformisms, or conveniences, or symptoms of blindness and deafness. We know that everything has a tendency to become comfortably complacent; the tendency is particularly apparent in the case of revolutions.

Thanks to his sincerity, to his research and exploration, the artist or the writer, in the same way as the philosopher or the scientist, puts forward his truth, the truth or reality of his person, an unexpected reality, unexpected for himself too, a revelation. Of course, this reality may be more or less important. But whether major or minor, it is always unexpected and embarrassing. The general reaction is one of refusal; why make an effort, why not be content with what is already known, why allow oneself to be disturbed? There is nothing that cannot be done without. However, in spite of everything, the new and embarrassing presence asserts itself. In the end, people begin to lend an ear. They take an interest in you, in what you have to offer; after shrugging their shoulders and making fun of you, they pay attention to you, they take into account what you have to say. It is brought home to them that the phoneyness was the truth. They realise that the writer is approaching reality from a new angle, that reality has been extended and enriched. The artist himself thought he was inventing. In fact, he was not inventing, he was discovering. Invention and discovery are identical. What the writer thought he saw springing up within himself, from himself, was an objective reality that other people will recognise as such and will be no longer able to deny. When they do eventually recognise it, they have the impression that they knew it already, and have always known it; it seems to them a simple and natural truth. Strangeness becomes normality, the incomprehensible becomes clear, the impossible is taken for granted. The world that has been invented and discovered, invented and discovered by the author, can no longer be done without. It has been assimilated, integrated. And often the novel truth then appears in its true light as a forgotten one, as a world that had been concealed and is now again revealed to the view.

And then it becomes so natural as to seem banal. Articles, essays, studies and books accumulate, all of them explaining, more or less learnedly, what the writer's contribution is. You are analysed, refuted, put into your context. Someone expresses the opinion that you have not carried what you have to say to its logical conclusion. You are asked to go further in one direction or another, according to what the particular critic would like you to say, and according to the various interpretations that are put upon you.

What has been written about me is, quantitatively, far more important than what I have written myself. I find the commentaries that have already been written on me so instructive that, had I a reliable memory and a methodical mind, I could compose a doctoral thesis about my work. And—what would be much more interesting—I could even compile a thesis on the psycho-sociology of my commentators. In a sense, the work one has written is distorted. It is as if it had ceased to be itself (but what would a work be like if it were only itself?). It is as if the work were merely what other people say about it and do with it. If I know the social background of a given critic, or merely even the newspaper or periodical he is writing for, I know in advance what he will say about the new play I have just finished, whether he will like it or detest it. Similarly, I have only to read an analysis, a review, or

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a mere summary of any one of my plays to know the political or ideological tendency of the critic. I can easily sketch a moral and intellectual portrait of him, The fact is that, though the work may be new, this is not necessarily true of the criteria by which it is judged; attitudes are predetermined, rigid. This probably also means that the work is not novel enough to break down the current criteria; its novelty is not powerful enough, people have managed to adapt it to established formulae, or more time will have to elapse before it can speak with its authentic voice and really make itself heard.

THE AUTHOR himself is astonished at the effect his works have had. He is happy, of course. Happy because, although sincere, he has always wondered whether his sincerity was genuine, whether he had not cheated in spite of himself. I think I have made it plain that it is novelty which is the sign of sincerity, of truth. What is original is true. What resembles everything else that is being done is false, because convention is an impersonal falsehood. The sincere and the true is what you have not been taught by other people. A parrot is not sincere. What it says does not concern it, remains incomprehensible to it.

Newness is essential to understanding. It follows that while the author, when writing, wonders to what extent he is justified, how far he is entitled to write what he is writing and waits for confirmation, he also wonders, once people have turned their attention towards him, if others have the right to say what they do about his work. You write to confide in others; you are displeased with yourself for having confided in them, displeased and anxious. The author may have the impression that what he has said and done has not been so much misunderstood as warped, distorted by all those who wish to adapt the work to their own ends and want to turn it into an instrument of their theology, their moral beliefs or their politics, want to use it as an illustration or justification of themselves. The sign of the value of a work is its sincerity, that is, its novelty, that is, its purity. The artist, in his profound subjectiveness, is essentially objective. That is how he comes to be at once new and old, by which I mean permanent, unknown and recognisable.

The same is true of the value of criticism. A criticism is valid in so far as it does not reflect the commonplaces of the current critical and intellectual systems. A criticism or an interpretation is good in so far as the interpreter approaches the work freshly, sincerely and objectively, in so far as he is prepared not necessarily to abandon his criteria, but to call them perpetually into question. I do not know, but I wonder if—ideally, of course—the critic should not be the representative of absolute objectivity, while the creator—just as ideally—would be the representative of total subjectivity. The bad critic is the arrogant one, who wants to foist himself upon the work, and who assumes a superior attitude towards it. Instead of adopting a schoolmasterish approach, the critic should be the pupil of the work.

Being oneself and renouncing oneself are equally difficult. To have a criterion or a scale of values is not necessarily a sign of objectivity. Moreover, the diversity of criteria is such that it only adds to the confusion. I can easily conceive of a form of criticism without criteria, of a kind of evaluation independent of any scale of values. It would perhaps be enough for the critic to be the describer of the work, that is, to be precise, someone who follows the work according to its own logic. The critic may, of course, be a philosopher, a moralist, a psychologist or a sociologist; but the determining of the moral system, the sociology or the philosophy of a work, while quite a legitimate operation in itself, takes place on a different level. It is not criticism of the work; it is something different. But the critic who describes the work, to be precise, someone who follows the work following it step by step, throws light on it; this is, in fact, the only way to do so. This is the way to tell whether it is possible to move through the universe of the work; we see where it leads, whether it leads anywhere, whether it contains culs-de-sac or blind alleys, and whether it has a coherence transcending its incoherencies and contradictions.

To write, also, is to think while in motion; to write is to explore. The critic must repeat the itinerary of the poet. Often the poet has moved forward in a kind of darkness or twilight. The critic covers the same ground with a lamp in his hand and illuminates the path. I have already said that the work is an edifice. It must be solidly constructed. It is the critic's business to notice if the roof is leaking or the staircase likely to collapse, or whether doors are locked, thus preventing access to certain rooms, or if there are any other snags.

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THE POET, as he writes, should forget about all the other works he may happen to know. The critic, ideally, should remember all existing works, if only to tell us whether the work is not a repetition. If it is not a repetition, this does not necessarily mean that it is outside all known frontiers. It takes its place in a general pattern; within this pattern, it is different from the other elements; it is a voice. But I wonder if this is really criticism, whether it is not closer to literary history or comparative literature. In applying himself to the description of the work, which he should understand in its most intimate functioning, the critic should not even say whether he likes or dislikes it, whether or not he prefers it to some other work, since to do so would be to display his subjectivity, and it is well known that there can be *no* arguing about tastes. Description ought to be his only form of judgment; criticism is the registering of the reality of a work, of its logic; it is a task of verification and confirmation.

In my opinion, the defects of a work are brought out by the describer's analytical description. It is in this sense that description is a judgment. The defects are faults of construction. The term construction is not very precise. It is not always a construction in the usual sense of the word, in the classical sense; sometimes, an absence of construction may still be a form of construction. We ought rather to say that the defects of a work result from an absence of rightness. It is not a question of imperfections; that again is a vague word; it is a question of non-genuineness. The defects of a work are due to that in it which is not in conformity with itself; to the fact that the work departs from the rules; not from the rules of art, because no-one knows what these are, and there are all sorts of rules and all kinds of æsthetic systems, but its own rules, and therefore from itself; each work is important in so far as it invents its own rules. Aesthetic systems can be constructed on the basis of the rules embodied in, and established by, a work of art. A different work of art may cause different rules to be established through the generalisation of its inner principles. That is why æsthetic systems are in disagreement with each other. It may be that the rules established externally by a work of art are only of secondary importance.

BUT IT SEEMS TO ME that questions and criteria are elaborated on the basis of these secondary rules. There may be some fundamental and absolute law, but I do not think that anyone has yet discovered it. No satisfactory definition of art exists. The defects of a work become obvious when analysis brings out a heterogeneousness which explains the flimsiness of the structure, when the work is shown to contain internal contradictions which neutralise each other instead of forming a living, creative tension. A work is bad when it is not itself, when it does not amount to something like a unique being or entity, existing independently of any other. It is not a question of requiring this entity to be beautiful or sound but of seeing whether—sound or unsound, beautiful or deformed—it is irreplaceable, non-interchangeable. The mistakes in a given work, the useless parts, are those parts which do not belong to it.

In other words, a work is organised, by which I mean that it is an organism. It is in this sense that a work is true and that art becomes indistinguishable from truth. This truth is, of course, subjective, since subjective truth is the artist's only truth. It is a subjectiveness so profound and complete that it is finally identical with objectivity; the artist must be objective or true in his subjectivity. The work is an expression of a certain attitude; this attitude takes shape, that is, becomes organised and—to repeat what was said above—is a living organism containing within itself all the antagonisms which must enter into its make-up without destroying it. The more complex and numerous the contrasts, the tensions and passions, the more important the work, and since the work is like a living organism, like a being or an entity, by the same token it is invention and discovery, imaginary and real, useful and useless, necessary and superfluous, objective and subjective, literature and truth. It is the outcome of a play-activity which is free from falsehood. Of course, you may reject the work or consider it harmful, just as you may condemn or kill a human being.

This latter function is not that of the critic but of the moralist, the sociologist, the theologian, or the public executioner. It is not the function of the critic or describer. Nor is it the function of the critic to explain why this particular entity exists for other people, why it is what it is, or why the public has done with it whatever it has done. I am not saying that such a study would be useless, unpropitious or propitious; I am saying that it is a different kind of work.

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IT SEEMS to me by now that I have, after all, perhaps managed to establish certain points. I note the fact that the passions and whims of the author and all the reasons he felt he had, or did not have, for writing, do not count or are transcended. The work is this transcendent act. The work is outside his control. It is something different from what he wanted to produce. It is an independent entity. Similarly, those who try to attribute an aim to the author's work are also deflecting their attention from it. But even if one wanted to turn one's back on it, one could not deny its existence, just as one cannot deny the existence of a person, whether one likes that person or not. He is what he is. He exists. He is there. He has to be taken into account. The administrative authorities, the descriptive critic have registered the birth of the person or the work, have noted his or its peculiarities in their records, have verified that it is not someone else's child, that it is a human creature and not a cat or a fish. What is to be done with it? That is another matter.

To criticise, then, is to show discernment. To discern or to see is to distinguish (this definitely *is*, and I duly note the fact) and to separate (*this* is not *that*). "That is what the work is," the pure critic would say, "I have expounded it to you. I have shown you what it is exactly in its inner workings; here is its *X*-ray photograph, its identity card." Criticism, which is concerned with this kind of discernment, is a separate activity. I repeat that the critic may at the same time be a philosopher of art or a philosopher; he may add the further function of psychologist or moralist; he may also go in for literary history or the comparative study of literature, but philosophy, history, etc. must come after objective criticism. The fields of operation are distinct and must not be allowed to overlap.

If the description is very detailed as it ought to be, if it follows the work very closely, it makes the oneness of the work comprehensible by entering into its inner functional vibrations; it enables us to see its movement or functioning (functioning is perhaps a better word than construction, because construction can be given various meanings); it brings out its intention and significance, almost spontaneously as it were. At the same time, the description of a given work, which of course ought only to be applicable to that particular work, emphasises what is universal in it, and allows it to stand out from the permanent, common human background on which it relies and from which it derives its justification. Each work is a peculiar manifestation, since it is unique, but at the same time it is recognisable.

THE FACT IS THAT ordinary "criticism," which is external to the work, does not go far towards defining it in its essential originality. What it says about a given work could apply to several others, to a whole family of works. It is easy to devise a test to prove the point. Take some commentary on a literary or dramatic work or on a picture. Keep the commentary, but change the name of the author and the title of the summary of the work under discussion, while of course replacing the quotations, and you will see that the commentator's comments apply equally well to the new quotations and, indeed, to the whole substituted work. The change will pass unnoticed. The explanation is that the commentator has concentrated on secondary features, not on the essential points, that he has lost contact and has taken refuge in more or less vague generalisations. The commentator has allowed the work to slip through his fingers and has retained only the general ideas contained in it, the philosophical or moral implications. He has looked upon the work as being no more than an illustration of these ideas, whereas the work, in its inner reality, is quite different from any such illustration or from the general ideas which may be present in a whole series of other works.

Proof is easily supplied. Let us take an example from art criticism. Here is a commentary on a picture, written by André Lhote:

> It will be noticed with what care the painter avoids repetition and excessive thickness or thinness of pigment, those common vices of painting. Each object is reduced to a pure sign, which is particularised in the extreme and stands in the sharpest contrast to its neighbour. The differentiation is just as marked between objects as between surfaces: there are no two alike in shape or size. The necessary reminders of the relationship between the masses are given by means of elements which are equivalent but of different natures. . . .

I wonder if this analysis could not be applied to several pictures which avoid repetition and other "common vices of painting" or in which the object is reduced to a "pure sign, particularised in the extreme and standing in the sharpest contrast to its neighbour." When André

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Lhote writes, in connection with another painting that "each element is placed in such a way that together with the neighbouring element, it constitutes a veritable composition based on a compensatory system of angles (right angles, obtuse or acute angles) and curves (more or less wide or sharp) and of ever varied dimensions...." and that "nothing is more ordered than this apparent dispersal, nothing more unexpected when one proceeds to analyse...." I also wonder if he is not referring to several pictures whose composition is based on "a compensatory system of angles" and of all those pictures in which "apparent dispersal" conceals a hidden pattern. Also, we may wonder whether, in this description, he is referring to Mondriaan or G. Van Velde. Far from it! He is writing about Breughel and Mantegna.[2]

Or again, another eminent critic, for whom I have a great respect, writes:

> His art remains very close to nature and is even Impressionist in some of his landscapes, in which can be felt the immediate and throbbing sensation... of the heaving of boats and sails in a harbour.

But who is he writing about? Dufy, some Impressionist or an earlier master? Not at all. He is referring to Manessier. When this same critic writes: "...the night of the Epiphany in a legend peopled with elfs and unicorns and traversed by the procession of the Magi... with the enchanted atmosphere of fairy tales and a hint of luxurious Orientalism," he is not dealing with Delacroix, nor with a Renaissance painter, nor with a Surrealist painter, but again with Manessier.

It is enough to make one wonder whether, in the last resort, the only possible criticism would not be to summarise the work, give an account of it, or better still, to show the picture in question or reproduce the poem or novel in its entirety. If this is so, the only possible commentary which does not distort the work is the total absence of commentary. I don't go as far as that, of course. I am content to say that the critic ought to be a kind of conscientious anatomist.

Again, perhaps the good critic would explain the work, translate it and tell us what it means: as Thibaudet did, if I remember rightly, in interpreting the poetry of Mallarmé and Valéry, I was saying that a critic is a man with a good memory who can tell us whether or not a work is new. If it is new, it is unique and its value lies in its newness. A work must be new, and it must also be true. A little later, perhaps, we can throw some light on the meaning of truth. This truth is simply the expression of the artist's profound sincerity. The greater or lesser value of a work can, then, only be determined by its greater or lesser richness; by the greater or lesser richness of the universe constituted by that newly invented entity, the work. A work comes after a long line of other works, as we know. This simply means that it has a heredity, that it is the child of its parents, but that it is not its parents.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, this is not the way things are, because in practice criticism is a mixture of everything; it is often everything but criticism. The creative artist, starting from, and expressing, his subjectivity, achieves objectivisation; the work, having been brought out from within and externalised, acquires independent existence. The author, who thought he was keeping a hold on himself, finds he has got rid of himself. On the other hand, critics who claim to be objective, or at least partly so, are often merely expressing their subjectivity.

It has been said that an author writes one play, the actors perform a different one, and the audience sees a third. The situation is even more complex than that. The truth of a work is more fragmentary, and the fragments of truth contrast with, and contradict, each other, even refute each other, to such an extent that all that seems to remain of the work is a pretext for innumerable, conflicting interpretations, the work appearing in fact as the meeting-point of interpretations for which it itself has ceased to be essential. It is as if there were an urge, or various urges, to deflect the work from its meaning. Once negation, distortion, and the making of numerous and contradictory interpretations stop, there is nothing left. Once a work has been defined and classified, it is dead. To revive it, it may be necessary to provide a new interpretation, that is, to turn it into something that it has never been before. A work seems to be no more than what other people are prepared to think about it. Or, alternatively, it is no more than a kind of source of radiation. This is because critics,

[2] It is easy to see that Lhote's prejudice was in favour of Cubism. All pictures, when he looked at them, turned into Cubist pictures. The whole history of painting was reduced to a history of Cubism.

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while imagining they are speaking about other people, are in practice talking about themselves and do not get rid of their egos. What they write reflects their psychological make-up more than the work reflects its author. The work, we might say, is made in the image of the author, whereas criticism of it seems to be wholly the reflection, the image of the critic. In practice, criticism is a document about critics much more than a document about, or an account of, the work.

THE CRITIC REMAINS a prisoner of himself; he expresses his feelings, his mentality, the mentality of his period which has conditioned him, his passions and his prejudices. In our time, every critic takes sides. He is only interested in finding in the work an illustration of his desires and ideas; he approves or disapproves of the work only in so far as it is in accordance with his desires and ideas. Whereas a work is obviously, amongst other things, the living expression of its time, but universalised and so transferred from the temporal to the extra-temporal, critics are no more than the particular, immediate, non-universalised, non-objectivised expression of their own mentality. All criticism is rooted in its topical setting; all criticism is journalism. Criticism, being thus the expression of a prejudice or being involuntarily subjective, is, through this fact alone, distorted.

Amongst other things, the criteria used prevent criticism being objective, and these criteria may be aesthetic, as well as moral or philosophical, dogmas. Whereas, as we have seen, the critic should call his criteria into question in the light of the work, instead he calls the work into question, and subordinates it to his doctrine.

Of course, the doctrine was originally determined by a work of art but later, through the effect of habit, routine, mental laziness and too great facility, the critic gave up questioning his own principles. However, in this case, we are merely dealing with what might be called disinterested misunderstanding. Very often, we are faced with something quite different. It is a more serious matter when the critic is a militant exponent of a moral, theological, or political system. In this case, the work will appear valid or invalid in so far as it can be used to illustrate or support the moral, theological, or political system.

One of my friends, who is a theatrical producer, summed up the situation as follows: "If I have a good machine-gun in perfect working-order which fires on my friends, I cannot say that this machine-gun is bad just because it fires on my friends. If I have an inefficient machine-gun, which is always going wrong, and which fires on my enemies, I cannot say that it is a good machine-gun, because it fires on my enemies." Deciding how well or how badly the machine-gun fires on any target is the business of the critic. The decision as to whom it is to be used against is a matter for political partisans, sociologists, politicians, or the army. But more often than not, criticism depends quite simply on the mood of the critic, spitefulness, rancour, jealousy or personal sympathies or antipathies, such as are normal between people living in the same town. The fact that they are friends or enemies is enough to invalidate day-to-day criticism which, unfortunately, is the kind with the most powerful immediate effect.

Literary people, authors and critics, form a fairly restricted society, a kind of family in which, as in all families, the members become annoyed with each other for various reasons or questions of petty interest. Instead of washing their dirty linen within the family circle, they hang it out for all the world to see. The serious thing is that the public, which knows nothing about these personal matters and takes all statements at their face value, is not alone in being deceived; the professors, research-workers and more remote critics are too. They believe in the critics' objectivity. They repeat the arguments, expound them, card-index them since, curiously enough, explanations of a work are more important than the work itself. Even the best informed people are affected by these arguments. Only very few of them read the work independently, taking no account of all that has been said about it. The works come to them, already interpreted, overloaded with commentaries, cluttered up with explanations and decked out with extraneous lights and shades. This is how, occasionally, a whole new —and false—science of literature is brought into being. This seems to me most obvious in the case of dramatic criticism, because it is more closely linked with topical events and so is nearer to journalism and random reporting than any other form.

I SAID that the genuine creative artist is absolutely sincere. What he says is true, but what is the nature of his truth and sincerity?

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The stories that the author tells us are invented; consequently, they are untrue. But precisely because the author has invented them, he is not telling lies, since to invent is to create and discover oneself. Since the created work is invented or imagined, it is a living entity, as I have already said: a real, living being. The reality of a created work is irrefutable. To tell lies is to deceive, or to replace one reality by another. It is to cheat, to make denials or assertions with some boastful or propagandist aim in view, which may be mean or morally generous. The creative artist recognises himself in the creatures of his inventions or imagination. We all know Flaubert's famous remark: "*Madame Bovary, c'est moi.*" The author does not substitute one thing for another as the liar does; he makes something which is itself. That is why truth has its roots in the imagination. As a matter of fact, Madame Bovary was probably not altogether Flaubert; she was a child of Flaubert and once he had given birth to her she was beyond his control.

In a way, an author who is defending a thesis is a forger. He leads his characters towards some predetermined goal; he forces them to move in a certain direction; he knows in advance what they have to be like; he sacrifices the freedom both of his characters and of his own creative act. His art is no longer an exploration since it is a by-product of an already charted area; his characters are merely puppets. There cannot be any revelation in what he does but merely illustration, exemplification. Everything is settled from the outset. The author defending a thesis is no longer acting in good faith; he can no longer be sincere. At the same time, too, of course, neither his work nor his characters can cause us any surprise. No thesis is absolutely and objectively true. The author defending a thesis gives that thesis priority over all other possible truths. Of course, the author defending a thesis may himself be a genuine creative artist, and he will be so in so far as, notwithstanding his initial intentions, he goes beyond his thesis, consciously or unconsciously, gives his characters their heads and allows himself to be carried away by his creative impulse. I have already said that probably most authors start with the intention of writing propaganda, but that the great writers are those who do not succeed in producing propaganda. In the last resort, their characters get the better of them.

For a long time now there has been a lot of talk about the need for a *théâtre populaire*, a people's theatre.[3] I fail to understand what is meant by this. Is it meant to be a form of theatre springing from some archaic, primitive depths? Is it a form of theatre written by the people, and if so, what do we mean by the people? Is it a form of theatre written for the people, an educational or politically educational theatre? If so, we are back to propagandist theatre, committed theatre, whose sincerity, truth and value we have denied. This kind of theatre is linked with state planning and intellectual tyranny on the part of the powers that be. I say state planning advisedly, because I do not mean that there should be no plan with the work itself or that it should be devoid of meaning. However, the plan must belong to it, must be within it, not imposed from without. Planning, in the other sense, deflects the work from its true purpose and distorts its meaning. In reality, the people means you, us, me; all of us have a right to express ourselves in literature; we reveal ourselves in our literature; we are not fundamentally separated from each other; each of us is in all the others and that is why the work of art is so telling. It speaks out with a new voice. It astonishes. It is an unidentified but identifiable being or entity.

Irrespective, then, of what the author wishes, or thinks he wishes, to prove, over and above his personal opinions, his anguish or his ambition, he should let himself be guided by his creative impulse. He suddenly feels that a whole world, at once expected and unexpected, is being revealed and is rising up before his astonished gaze. This world which is appearing to him is as strange as the world in which we all live, for the world is strange, if we look at it freshly and attentively during those occasional moments of respite which occur in the daily bustle. The author must allow this world to come into being. It is a true and a fragile world. He must not alter it or interfere with it in any way. He must look at it, he must contemplate it with the greatest attention. He must have the impression that he is allowing his characters to speak for themselves and that he is allowing events to take place independently of his guidance. He acts as a spectator of his own subjectivity and stands back from it. He

[3] Tr.'s note. *Théâtre populaire*—a form of theatre aimed primarily at the working-classes, as opposed to middle-class theatre.

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may say what he thinks about it later, since he has the right to be his own critic, as well as his own moralist, philosopher, or psychologist. For the time being, he does not know what he should think about it. He should not even think about it at all; he should merely register its existence. If the author is very attentive and objective, he will come to realise that the entity or world of his creation was asking to be born and has its own laws, logic, and destiny. But he should allow it to unfold, as it is, as it must be, as it wants to be, when it is left to itself and given complete freedom.

THE AUTHOR'S PRIVATE WORRIES are transcended, and so is he himself. His petty problems are no longer of any significance. He has found, he has seen, what he was looking for; a world has come into being, but does not prove its being except by being alive. The author, astonished and yet not astonished by it all, has the feeling that he did no more than give the initial push; that he simply opened the gates and allowed this world and its inhabitants to come out from within him, to be born, grow and live their lives. And this perhaps makes it plain that the work of the imagination, which transcends falsehood and truth, or rather falsehood and truth as rigidly defined by moral systems based on abstract ideology, is the only kind of work to have its roots in that fundamental reality we call life; the only work which continues to be present, the permanence of its nature being unaffected by transmutations and its construction unshakeable because, although it may be diversely appreciated, the continuously changing factors will be the sensibilities and attitudes of the public, while the work itself will remain invulnerable, intact, and unharmed.

It is in this sense that we can talk, to a certain extent, about the "eternity" of a work of art, whereas all other things being subject to change—outmoded ideologies, hypotheses that have been verified and then disproved, ruined thoughts—collapse and decay.

November–London

The sun's pennyworth is running out;
Birds flitting stiffly through the trees
Are uttering the last faint whirrs
Of the machinery slowing to a halt.

Breath-cloud bred, a dusk
Heavy with the stillness before snow
Awaits its final precipitate;
A distant, traffic-muffled "Late!"

Is shuffling slowly closer. Into what
Dankly-dripping future, mining their way
Deeper and deeper nightly do these
Random bangers dully detonate?

Harry Fainlight

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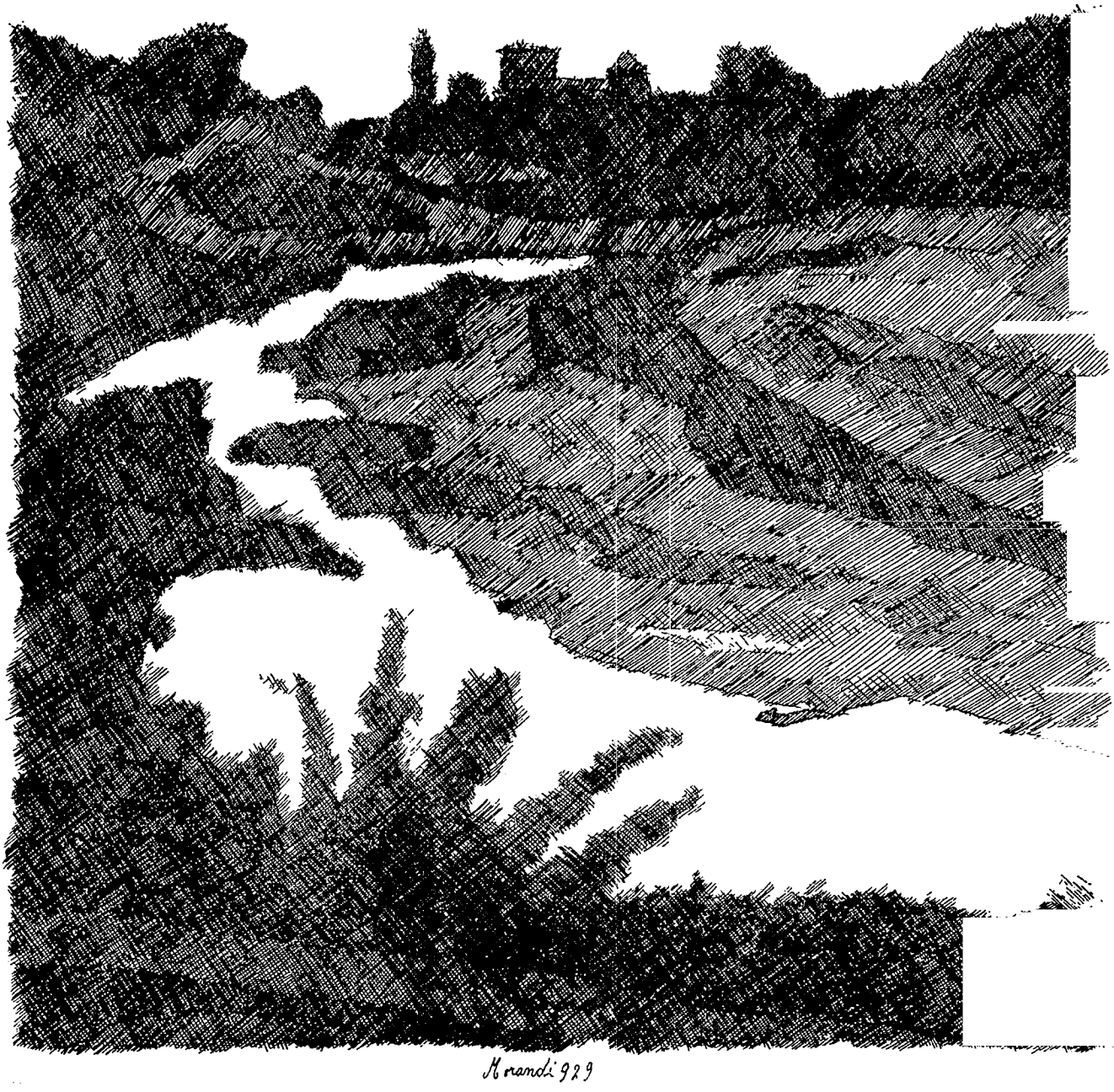

Morandi

Giorgio Morandi died last month in Bologna, the city in which he was born. He never travelled abroad; his contact with other artists was limited; most of his work was done in the rooms he had occupied since childhood. For many years he taught etching at the Academia of Bologna.

The basis of his style was in the Pittura Metafisica *of de Chirico and Carrà which he encountered in 1918. Essentially a reactionary movement with certain parallels in post-war France,* Pittura Metafisica *was turning to the national past, to Giotto and the Quatrocento, for an alternative to the rowdy cosmopolitan adventures of Futurism. De Chirico's and Carrà's* italianità *was to bear doubtful fruit later on in their careers, but other aspects of their style proved fertile. Their exploitation of perspective space, for instance, as an expression of timelessness, was taken over by Surrealism, so was their insistence on the integrity of individual objects seen in isolation.*

Morandi's evolution out of Pittura Metafisica *is one of the strangest transformations in modern art. Showing no interest in its rhetoric or its historical pose he began to relate its charged sense of space and stillness to real vision. He painted landscape on the spot—during the 'twenties and again in a wonderful burst of work during the last war—*

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and paper flowers, and still lifes. The last were composed of modest objects, oil cans, crocks, vases, a paraffin lamp—and endless bottles. He surrounded himself with these things in permanent arrangements, sometimes painting the bottles themselves, allowing the dust of years to settle on them, watching them as the light moved across them, living with them as a man lives with a loved city. His canvases are modest in size, always intensely, slowly painted. The shelf or table that the objects stand on is like a horizon. It is invariably low in the picture, and square on, so that the bottles seem to tower like campaniles against a pale sky. Space is shallow, compressed within a narrow frame like the space of a bas relief, and an extraordinary tension develops between the soaring scale of the bottles and the space that surrounds them so tightly. There is always a multiple experience of grandeur and intimacy, of mass and of the inter-relation of objects, of timelessness and of watching.

How is it that these pictures, anachronistic in method and frankly retrospective in mood, are yet unmistakably modern? The answer is surely first in the quality of the light that dominates his work. This is neither an ideal luminosity, nor a descriptive system, but real and felt. It has a poignant intensity which is unimaginable at a time when to paint real things by the light that falls on them is not in itself an isolated, challenging thing to do. ANDREW FORGE

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Christopher Isherwood

The Class on the Campus

From a New Novel

THEY ARE PASSING the tennis courts, at this moment. Only one court is occupied, by two young men playing singles. The sun has come out with sudden fierce heat through the smog-haze, and the two are stripped nearly naked. They have nothing on their bodies but rubber gym-boots and knit shorts of the kind cyclists wear, very short and close-fitting, moulding themselves to the buttocks and the loins. They are absolutely unaware of the passers-by, isolated in the intentness of their game. You would think there was no net between them. Their nakedness makes them seem close to each other and directly opposed, body to body, like fighters. If this were a fight, though, it would be one-sided, for the boy on the left is much the smaller. He is Mexican maybe, black-haired, handsome, catlike, cruel, compact, lithe, muscular; quick and graceful on his feet. His body is a natural dark gold brown; there is a fuzz of curly black hair on his chest and belly and thighs. He plays hard and fast, with cruel mastery, baring his white teeth unsmiling, as he slams back the ball. He is going to win. His opponent, the big blond boy, already knows this; there is a touching gallantry in his defence. He is so sweet-naturedly beautiful, so nobly made; and yet his classical cream marble body seems a handicap to him. The rules of the game inhibit it from functioning. He is fighting at a hopeless disadvantage. He should throw away his useless racket, vault over the net, and force the cruel little gold cat to submit to his marble strength. No, on the contrary, the blond boy accepts the rules, binds himself by them, will suffer defeat and humiliation rather than break them. His helpless bigness and blondness give him an air of unmodern chivalry. He will fight clean, a perfect sportsman, until he has lost the last game. And won't this keep happening to him all through his life? Won't he keep getting himself involved in the wrong kind of game, the kind of game he was never born to play, against an opponent who is quick and clever and merciless?

This game is cruel; but its cruelty is sensual and stirs George into hot excitement. He feels a thrill of pleasure to find the senses so eager in their response; too often, now, they seem sadly jaded. From his heart, he thanks these young animals for their beauty. And they will never know what they have done to make this moment marvellous to him, and life itself less hateful—

Dreyer is saying, "Sorry, Sir—I lost you for a minute, there. I understand about the Two Cultures, of course—but, do you mean you *agree* with Dr. Leavis?" Far from taking the faintest interest in the tennis players, Dreyer walks with his body half turned away from them; his whole concentration fixed upon George's talking head.

For it obviously *has* been talking. George realises this with the same discomfiture he felt on the freeway, when the chauffeur-figure got them clear downtown. Oh yes, he

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knows from experience what the talking-head can do, late in the evening, when he is bored and tired and drunk, to help him through a dull party. It can play back all of George's favourite theories—just as long as it isn't argued with; then it may become confused. It knows at least three dozen of his best anecdotes. But *here,* in broad daylight, during campus-hours, when George should be on-stage, every second, in full control of his performance! Can it be that talking-head and the chauffeur are in league? *Are they maybe planning a merger?*

"We really haven't time to go into all this right now," he tells Dreyer smoothly. "And anyhow, I'd like to check up on the Leavis lecture again. I've still got that issue of *The Spectator* somewhere at home, I think.... Oh, by the way, did you ever get to read that piece on Mailer, about a month ago—in *Esquire*, wasn't it? It's one of the best things I've seen in a long time—"

GEORGE'S classroom has two doors in its long side wall; one up front, the other at the back of the room. Most of the students enter from the back because, with an infuriating sheep-obstinacy, they love to huddle together confronting their teachers from behind a barricade of empty seats. But, this semester, the class is only a trifle smaller than the capacity of the room. Latecomers are forced to sit farther and farther forward, to George's sly satisfaction; finally they have to take the second row. As for the front row, which most of them shun so doggedly, George can fill that up with his regulars: Russ Dreyer, Tom Kugelman, Sister Maria, Mr. Stoessel, Mrs. Netta Torres, Kenny Potter, Lois Yamaguchi.

George never enters the classroom with Dreyer, or any other student. A deeply-rooted dramatic instinct forbids him to do so. This is really all that he uses his office for; as a place to withdraw into before class, simply in order to re-emerge from it and make his entrance. He doesn't interview students in it, because these offices are shared by at least two faculty members, and Dr. Gottlieb, who teaches the Metaphysical Poets, is nearly always there. George cannot talk to another human being as if the two of them were alone, when in fact they aren't. Even such a harmless question as, "what do you *honestly* think of Emerson?" sounds indecently intimate, and such a mild criticism as, "what you've written is a mixed metaphor and it doesn't mean anything" sounds unnecessarily cruel, when Dr. Gottlieb is right there at the other desk listening or, what's worse, pretending not to listen. But Gottlieb obviously doesn't feel this way. Perhaps it is a peculiarly British scruple.

So now, leaving Dreyer, George goes into the office. It is right across the hallway. Gottlieb isn't there, for a wonder. George peeps out of the window, between the slats of the venetian blinds, and sees, in the far distance, the two tennis players still at their game. He coughs, fingers the telephone directory without looking at it, closes the empty drawer in his desk, which has been pulled open a little. Then, abruptly, he turns, takes his briefcase out of the closet, leaves the office and crosses to the front classroom door.

His entrance is quite undramatic, according to conventional standards. Nevertheless, this is a subtly contrived, outrageously theatrical effect. No hush falls as George walks in. Most of the students go right on talking. But they are all watching him, waiting for him to give some sign, no matter how slight, that the class is to begin. The effect is a subtle but gradually increasing tension, caused by George's teasing refusal to give this sign and the students' counter-determination not to stop talking until he gives it.

Meanwhile, he stands there, Slowly, deliberately, like a magician, he takes a single book out of his briefcase and places it on the reading-desk. As he does this, his eyes move over the faces of the class. His lips curve in a faint but bold smile. Some of them smile back at him. George finds this frank confrontation extraordinarily exhilarating. He draws strength from these smiles, these bright young eyes. For him, this is one of the peak moments of the day. He feels brilliant, vital, challenging, slightly mysterious and,

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above all, *foreign*. His neat dark clothes, his white dress shirt and tie (the only tie in the room) are uncompromisingly alien from the aggressively virile informality of the young male students. Most of these wear sneakers and thick white wool sweatsocks; jeans in cold weather and in warm weather shorts (the thigh-clinging Bermuda type; the more becoming short ones aren't considered quite decent). If it is really warm, they'll roll up their sleeves and sometimes leave their shirts provocatively unbuttoned to show curly chest-hair and a Christopher medal. They look as if they were ready at any minute to switch from studying to ditch-digging or gang-fighting. They seem like mere clumsy kids in contrast with the girls; for these have all outgrown their teenage phase of Capri pants, sloppy shirts, and giant heads of teased-up hair. They are mature women, and they come to class dressed as if for a highly respectable party.

THIS MORNING, George notes that all of his front-row regulars are present. Dreyer and Kugelman are the only ones he has actually asked to help fill the gap by sitting there; the rest of them have their individual reasons for doing so. While George is teaching, Dreyer watches him with an encouraging alertness; but George knows that Dreyer isn't really impressed by him. To Dreyer, George will always remain an academic amateur; his degrees and background are British and therefore dubious. Still, George is the Skipper, the Old Man; and Dreyer, by supporting his authority, supports the structure of values up which he himself proposes to climb. So he wills George to be brilliant and impress the outsiders—that is to say, everyone else in the class. The funny thing is that Dreyer, with the clear conscience of absolute loyalty, feels free to whisper to Kugelman, *his* lieutenant, as often as he wants to. Whenever this happens, George longs to stop talking and listen to what they are saying about him. Instinctively, George is sure that Dreyer would never dream of talking about anyone else during class; *that* would be bad manners.

Sister Maria belongs to a teaching Order. Soon she'll get her credentials and become a teacher herself. She is, no doubt, a fairly normal unimaginative hardworking good young woman; and no doubt she sits up front because it helps her concentrate, maybe even because the boys still interest her a little and she wants to avoid looking at them. But we most of us lose our sense of proportion in the presence of a nun; and George, thus exposed at short range to this bride of Christ in her uncompromising medieval habit, finds himself becoming flustered, defensive. An unwilling conscript in Hell's legions, he faces the soldier of Heaven across the front-line of an exceedingly polite cold war. In every sentence he addresses to her, he calls her "Sister"; which is probably just what she doesn't want.

Mr. Stoessel sits in the front row because he is deaf and middle-aged and only lately arrived from Europe, and his English is terrible.

Mrs. Netta Torres is also middle-aged. She seems to be taking this course out of mere curiosity, or to fill in idle hours. She has the look of a divorcee. She sits up front because her interest is centred frankly and brutally on George as George. She watches rather than listens to him. She even seems to be "reading" his words indirectly, through a sort of braille made up of his gestures, inflections, mannerisms. And this almost tactile scrutiny is accompanied by a motherly smile; for, to Mrs. Torres, George is just a small boy really, and so cute. George would love to catch her out and discourage her from attending his class by giving her low grades. But, alas, he can't. Mrs. Torres is listening as well as watching; she can repeat what he has been saying, word for word.

Kenny Potter sits in the front row because he's what's nowadays called crazy, meaning only that he tends to do the opposite of what most people do; not on principle, however, and certainly not out of aggressiveness. Probably he's too vague to notice the manners and customs of the tribe, and too lazy to follow them, anyway. He is a tall skinny boy with very broad stooped shoulders, gold-

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red hair, a small head, small bright blue eyes. He would be conventionally handsome if he didn't have a beaky nose; but it is a nice one, a large humorous organ.

George finds himself almost continuously aware of Kenny's presence in the room; but this doesn't mean that he regards Kenny as an ally. Oh no—he can never venture to take Kenny for granted. Sometimes, when George makes a joke and Kenny laughs his deep rather wild laugh, George feels he is being laughed with. At other times, when the laugh comes a fraction of a moment late, George gets a spooky impression that Kenny is laughing not at the joke but at the whole situation; the educational system of this country, and all the economic and political and psychological forces which have brought them into this classroom together. At such times, George suspects Kenny of understanding the innermost meaning of life; of being, in fact, some sort of a genius. (Though you would certainly never guess this from his term papers.) And then again, maybe Kenny is just very young for his age, and misleadingly charming, and silly.

Lois Yamaguchi sits beside Kenny because she is his girl friend; at least, they are nearly always together. She smiles at George in a way which makes him wonder if she and Kenny have private jokes about him; but who can be sure of anything with these enigmatic Asians? Alexander Mong smiles enigmatically, too; though his beautiful head almost certainly contains nothing but clotted oil paint. Lois and Alexander are by far the most beautiful creatures in the class; their beauty is like the beauty of plants, seemingly untroubled by vanity, anxiety, or effort.

ALL THIS WHILE, the tension has been mounting. George has continued to smile at the talkers and to preserve his wonderful provocative melodramatic silence. And now, at last, after nearly four whole minutes, his silence has conquered them. The talking dies down. Those who have already stopped talking shush the others. George has triumphed. But his triumph lasts only for a moment. For now he must break his own spell. Now he must cast off his mysteriousness and stand revealed as that dime-a-dozen thing, a teacher —to whom the class has got to listen, no matter whether he drools or stammers or speaks with the tongue of an angel—that's neither here nor there. The class has got to listen to George because, by virtue of the powers vested in him by the State of California, he can make them submit to and study even his crassest prejudices, his most irresponsible caprices, as so many valuable clues to the problem: How can I impress, flatter, or otherwise con this cantankerous old thing into giving me a good grade?

Yes, alas, now he must spoil everything. Now he must speak.

"AFTER MANY a summer *dies* the swan." George rolls the words off his tongue with such hammy harmonics, such shameless relish, that this sounds like a parody of W. B. Yeats reciting. (He comes down on *dies* with a great thump to compensate for the *And* which Aldous Huxley has chopped off from the beginning of the original line.) Then, having managed to startle or embarrass at least a few of them, he looks around the room with an ironical grin and says quietly, schoolmasterishly, "I take it you've all read the Huxley novel by this time, seeing that I asked you to more than three weeks ago?"

Out of the corner of his eye, he notices Buddy Sorensen's evident dismay, which is not unexpected, and Estelle Oxford's indignant *now*-they-tell-me shrug of the shoulders, which is more serious. Estelle is one of his brightest students. Just because she is bright, she is more conscious of being a Negro, apparently, than the other coloured students in the class are; in fact, she is hyper-sensitive. George suspects her of suspecting him of all kinds of subtle discrimination. Probably she wasn't in the room when he told them to read the novel. Damn, he should have noticed that and told her later. He is a bit intimidated by her. Also he likes her and is sorry. Also he resents the way she makes him feel.

"Oh well," he says, as nicely as he can,

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"if any of you haven't read it yet, that's not too important. Just listen to what's said this morning, and then you can read it and see if you agree or disagree."

He looks at Estelle and smiles. She smiles back. So, this time, it's going to be all right.

"The title is, of course, a quotation from Tennyson's poem *Tithonus*. And, by the way, while we're on the subject—who *was* Tithonus?"

Silence. He looks from face to face. Nobody knows. Even Dreyer doesn't know. And, Christ, how typical this is! Tithonus doesn't concern them because he's at two removes from their subject. Huxley, Tennyson, Tithonus. They're prepared to go as far as Tennyson, but not one step farther. There their curiosity ends. Because, basically, *they don't give a shit*—

"You *seriously* mean to tell me that none of you knows who Tithonus was? That none of you could be bothered to find out? Well, then, I advise you *all* to spend part of your week-end reading Graves' *Greek Myths, and* the poem itself. I must say, I don't see how anyone can pretend to be interested in a novel when he doesn't even stop to ask himself what its title means."

This spurt of ill-temper dismays George as soon as he has discharged it. Oh dear, he *is* getting nasty! And the worst is, he never knows when he's going to behave like this. He has no time to check himself. Shamefaced, now, and avoiding all their eyes—Kenny Potter's particularly—he fastens his gaze high up on the wall opposite.

"Well, to begin at the beginning, Aphrodite once caught her lover Ares in bed with Eos, the goddess of the Dawn. (You'd better look them *all* up, while you're about it.) Aphrodite was furious, of course, so she cursed Eos with a craze for handsome mortal boys—to teach her to leave other people's gods alone." (George gets a giggle on this line from someone and is relieved; he has feared they would be offended by their scolding and sulk. Not lowering his eyes yet, he continues, with a grin sounding in his voice.) "Eos was terribly embarrassed, but she found she just couldn't control herself, so she started kidnapping and seducing boys from the earth. Tithonus was one of them. As a matter of fact, she took his brother Ganymede along too—for company—" (Louder giggles, from several parts of the room, this time.) "Unfortunately, Zeus saw Ganymede and fell madly in love with him." (If Sister Maria is shocked, that's just too bad. George doesn't look at her, however, but at Wally Bryant—about whom he couldn't be more certain—and sure enough Wally is wriggling with delight.) "So, knowing that she'd have to give up Ganymede anyway, Eos asked Zeus, wouldn't he, in exchange, make Tithonus immortal? So Zeus said, of course, why not? And he did it. But Eos was so stupid, she forgot to ask him to give Tithonus eternal youth, as well. Incidentally, that could quite easily have been arranged; Selene, the Moon goddess, fixed it up for her boy friend Endymion. The only trouble there was that Selene didn't care to do anything but kiss, whereas Endymion had other ideas; so she put him into an eternal sleep to keep him quiet. And it's not much fun being beautiful for ever and ever, when you can't even wake up and look at yourself in a mirror." (Nearly everybody is smiling, now—yes, even Sister Maria. George beams at them. He does so hate unpleasantness.) "Where was I? Oh yes—so poor Tithonus gradually became a repulsively immortal old man—" (Loud laughter.) "And Eos, with the characteristic heartlessness of a goddess, got bored with him and locked him up. And he got more and more gaga, and his voice got shriller and shriller, until suddenly one day he turned into a cicada."

This is a miserably weak pay-off. George hasn't expected it to work, and it doesn't. Mr. Stoessel is quite frantic with uncomprehension and appeals to Dreyer in desperate whispers. Dreyer whispers back explanations, which cause further misunderstandings. Mr. Stoessel gets it at last and exclaims, "ach *so* —eine *Zikade*!" in a reproachful tone which implies that it's George and the entire Anglo-American world who have been mispronouncing the word. But by now George has started up again; and with a change of atti-

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tude. He's no longer wooing them, entertaining them; he's telling them, briskly, authoritatively. It is the voice of a judge, summing up and charging the jury.

"Huxley's general reason for choosing this title is obvious. However, you will have to ask yourselves how far it will bear application in detail to the circumstances of the story. For example, the Fifth Earl of Gonister can be accepted as a counterpart of Tithonus, and he ends by turning into a monkey, just as Tithonus turned into an insect. But what about Jo Stoyte? And Dr. Obispo? He's far more like Goethe's Mephistopheles than like Zeus. And who is Eos? Not Virginia Maunciple, surely? For one thing, I feel sure she doesn't get up early enough." Nobody sees this joke. George still sometimes throws one away, despite all his experience, by muttering it, English style. A bit piqued by their failure to applaud, he continues, in an almost bullying tone, "But, before we can go any further, you've got to make up your minds what this novel actually *is* about."

They spend the rest of the hour making up their minds.

AT FIRST, as always, there is blank silence. The class sits staring, as it were, at the semantically prodigious word. *About. What is it about?* Well, what does George want them to say it's about? They'll say it's about anything he likes, anything at all. For nearly all of them, despite their academic training, deep deep down still regard this *about* business as a tiresomely sophisticated game. As for the minority, who have cultivated the *about* approach until it has become second nature, who dream of writing an *about* book of their own one day, on Faulkner, James, or Conrad, proving definitively that all previous *about* books on that subject are about nothing—they aren't going to say anything yet awhile. They are waiting for the moment when they can come forward like star detectives with the solution to Huxley's crime. Meanwhile, let the little ones flounder. Let the mud be stirred up, first.

The mud is obligingly stirred up by Alexander Mong. He knows what he's doing, of course. He isn't dumb. Maybe it's even part of his philosophy as an abstract painter to regard anything figurative as merely childish. A Caucasian would get aggressive about this, but not Alexander. With that beautiful Chinese smile, he says, "it's about this rich guy who's jealous because he's afraid he's too old for this girl of his, and he thinks this young guy is on the make for her, only he isn't, and he doesn't have a hope, because she and the doctor already made the scene. So the rich guy shoots the young guy by mistake, and the doctor like covers up for them and then they all go to England to find this Earl character who's monkeying around with a dame in a cellar—"

A roar of joy at this. George smiles goodsportingly and says, "you left out Mr. Pordage and Mr. Propter—what do they do?"

"Pordage? Oh yes—he's the one that finds out about the Earl eating those crazy fish—"

"Carp."

"That's right. . . . And Propter—" Alexander grins and scratches his head, clowning it up a bit, "I'm sorry, Sir. You'll have to excuse me. I mean I didn't hit the sack till half-past-two this morning, trying to figure that cat out. Wow! I don't dig that jazz."

More laughter. Alexander has fulfilled his function. He has put the case, charmingly, for the philistines. Now tongues are loosened and the inquest can proceed.

Here are some of its findings:

Mr. Propter shouldn't have said the ego is unreal; this proves that he has no faith in human nature.

This novel is arid and abstract mysticism. What do we need eternity for, anyway?

This novel is clever but cynical. Huxley should dwell more on the warm human emotions.

This novel is a wonderful spiritual sermon. It teaches us that we aren't meant to pry into the mysteries of life. We mustn't tamper with eternity.

Huxley is marvellously zany. He wants to get rid of people and make the world safe for animals and spirits.

To say time is evil because evil happens in time is like saying the ocean is a fish because fish happen in the ocean.

Mr. Propter has no sex-life. This makes him unconvincing as a character.

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Mr. Pordage's sex-life is unconvincing.

Mr. Propter is a Jeffersonian democrat, an anarchist, a bolshevik, a proto-John-Bircher.

Mr. Propter is an escapist. This is illustrated by the conversation with Pete about the Civil War in Spain. Pete was a good guy until Mr. Propter brainwashed him and he had a failure of nerve and started to believe in God.

Huxley really understands women. Giving Virginia a rose-coloured motor scooter was a perfect touch.

And so on and so forth. . . . George stands there smiling, saying very little, letting them enjoy themselves. He presides over the novel like an attendant at a carnival booth, encouraging the crowd to throw and smash their targets; it's all good clean fun. However, there are certain ground rules which must be upheld. When someone starts in about mescalin and lysergic acid, implying that Mr. Huxley is next door to being a dope addict, George curtly contradicts him. When someone else coyly tries to turn the *clef* in the *roman*—is there, couldn't there be some connection between a certain notorious lady and Jo Stoyte's shooting of Pete?—George tells him absolutely not; *that* fairy tale was exploded back in the thirties.

And now comes a question George has been expecting. It is asked, of course, by Myron Hirsch, that indefatigable heckler of the goyim. "Sir, here on page 79, Mr. Propter says the stupidest text in the Bible is *they hated me without a cause*. Does he mean by that the Nazis were right to hate the Jews? Is Huxley anti-semitic?"

George draws a long breath. "No," he answers mildly.

And then—after a pause of expectant silence; the class is rather thrilled by Myron's bluntness—he repeats loudly and severely, "No—

"Mr. Huxley is *not* anti-semitic. The Nazis were *not* right to hate the Jews. But their hating the Jews was *not* without a cause. No one *ever* hates without a cause—

"Look—let's leave the Jews out of this, shall we? Whatever attitude you take, it's impossible to discuss Jews objectively nowadays. It probably won't be possible for the next twenty years. So let's think about this in terms of some other minority, any one you like, but a small one—one that isn't organised and doesn't have any committees to defend it—"

GEORGE LOOKS at Wally Bryant with a deep shining look that says, I am with you, little minority-sister. Wally is plump and sallow-faced, and the care he takes to comb his wavy hair and keep his nails filed and polished and his eyebrows discreetly plucked only makes him that much less appetising. Obviously, he has understood George's look. He is embarrassed. Never mind! George is going to teach him a lesson now that he'll never forget. Is going to turn Wally's eyes into his timid soul. Is going to give him courage to throw away his nail-file and face the truth of his life—

"Now, for example, people with freckles aren't thought of as a minority by the non-freckled. They *aren't* a minority in the sense we're talking about. And why aren't they? Because a minority is only thought of as a minority when it constitutes some kind of a threat to the majority, real or imaginary. And no threat is ever *quite* imaginary. Anyone here disagree with that? If you do, just ask yourself; what would this particular minority do if it suddenly became the majority, overnight? You see what I mean? Well, if you don't—think it over!

"All right—now along come the liberals—including everybody in this room, I trust—and they say, 'minorities are just people, like us.' Sure, minorities are people; *people*, not angels. Sure, they're like us—but not *exactly* like us; that's the all-too-familiar state of liberal hysteria, in which you begin to kid yourself you honestly cannot see any difference between a Negro and a Swede—" (Why, oh why daren't George say "between Estelle Oxford and Buddy Sorensen?" Maybe, if he did, there would be a great atomic blast of laughter, and everybody would embrace, and the kingdom of heaven would begin, right here in classroom 278. But then, again, maybe it wouldn't.)

"So, let's face it, minorities are people who probably look and act and think differently from us, and have faults we don't have. We

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may dislike the way they look and act, and we may hate their faults. And it's *better* if we admit to disliking and hating them, than if we try to smear our feelings over with pseudo-liberal sentimentality. If we're frank about our feelings, we have a safety-valve; and if we have a safety-valve, we're actually less likely to start persecuting.... I know that theory is unfashionable nowadays. We all keep trying to believe that, if we ignore something long enough, it'll just vanish—

"Where was I? Oh yes.... Well, now, suppose this minority does get persecuted —never mind why—political, economic, psychological reasons—there always *is* a reason, no matter how wrong it is—that's my point. And, of course, persecution itself is always wrong; I'm sure we all agree there.... But, the worst of it is, we now run into another liberal heresy. *Because* the persecuting majority is vile, says the liberal, *therefore* the persecuted minority must be stainlessly pure. Can't you see what nonsense that is? What's to prevent the bad from being persecuted by the worse? Did all the Christian victims in the arena have to be saints?

"And I'll tell you something else. A minority has its own kind of aggression. It absolutely dares the majority to attack it. It hates the majority—not without a cause, I grant you. It even hates the other minorities —because all minorities are in competition; each one proclaims that its sufferings are the worst and its wrongs are the blackest. And the more they all hate, and the more they're all persecuted, the nastier they become! Do you think it makes people nasty to be loved? You know it doesn't! Then why should it make them nice to be loathed? While you're being persecuted, you hate what's happening to you, you hate the people who are making it happen; you're in a world of hate. Why, you wouldn't recognise love if you met it! You'd suspect love! You'd think there was something behind it—some motive—some trick—"

By this time, George no longer knows what he has proved or disproved, whose side, if any, he is arguing on, or indeed just exactly what he is talking about. And yet these sentences have blurted themselves out of his mouth with genuine passion. He has meant every one of them, be they sense or nonsense. He has administered them like strokes of a lash, to whip Wally awake, and Estelle too, and Myron, and all of them. He who has ears to hear, let him hear—

Wally continues to look embarrassed—but, no, neither whipped nor awakened. And now George becomes aware that Wally's eyes are no longer on his face; they are raised and focused on a point somewhere behind him, on the wall above his head.... And now, as he glances rapidly across the room, faltering, losing momentum, George sees all the other pairs of eyes raised also—focused on that damned clock. He doesn't need to turn and look for himself; he knows he must be running overtime. Brusquely, he breaks off, telling them, "we'll go on with this on Monday." And they all rise instantly to their feet, collecting their books, breaking into chatter.

WELL, AFTER ALL, what else can you expect? They have to hurry, most of them, to get someplace else within the next ten minutes. Nevertheless, George's feathers are ruffled. It's been a long time since last he forgot and let himself get up steam like this, right at the end of a period. How humiliating! The silly enthusiastic old prof, rambling on, disregarding the clock, and the class sighing to itself, "he's off again!" Just for a moment, George hates them, hates their brute basic indifference, as they drain quickly out of the room. Once again, the diamond has been offered publicly for a nickel, and they have turned from it with a shrug and a grin, thinking the old peddler crazy.

So he smiles with an extra benevolence on the three who have lingered behind to ask him questions. But Sister Maria merely wants to know if George, when he sets the final examination, will require them to have read all of those books which Mr. Huxley mentions in this novel. George thinks, how

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amusing to tell her, yes, including *The 120 Days of Sodom*. But he doesn't, of course. He reassures her and she goes away happy, her academic load that much the lighter.

And then Buddy Sorensen merely wants to excuse himself. "I'm sorry, Sir—I didn't read the Huxley because I thought you'd be going through it with us first." Is this sheer idiocy or slyness? George can't be bothered to find out. "Ban the Bomb!" he says, looking at Buddy's button; and Buddy, to whom he has said this before, grins happily, "Yes, Sir, you bet!"

Mrs. Netta Torres wants to know if Mr. Huxley had an actual English village in mind as the original of his Gonister. George is unable to answer this; he can only tell Mrs. Torres that, in the last chapter, when Obispo and Stoyte and Virginia are in search of the Fifth Earl, they appear to be driving out of London in a south-westerly direction. So, most likely, Gonister is supposed to be somewhere in Hampshire or Sussex. . . . But now it becomes clear that Mrs. Torres' question has been a pretext, merely. She has brought up the subject of England in order to tell him that she spent three unforgettable weeks there, ten years ago. Only most of it was in Scotland, and the rest all in London. "Whenever you're speaking to us," she tells George, as her eyes fervently probe his face, "I keep remembering that beautiful accent. It's like music." (George is strongly tempted to ask her just which accent she has in mind. Can it be Cockney or Gorbals?) And now Mrs. Torres wants to know the name of his birthplace, and he tells her, and she has never heard of it. He takes advantage of her momentary frustration to break off their *tête-à-tête*.

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Card Players in Lucca

Plump, popeyed, sweating,
His paws keep up their beating
On coarse wood; the wine at his elbow
Coarse too, but palatable as he follows
The turn of a card, luck advancing or retreating.

Where others are tense, he is amiable,
Attentive but relaxed, his pleasure
Aloof from mere money, (of which he is capable
Of earning sufficient), not treasure,
Only a substance freely expendable.

He wins more than he loses,
It is not of great import, nor does
He make it appear so. He chooses
To dissemble, though dissembling is unnecessary,
His emotion aesthetic, purely anticipatory.

Later, mopping his brow after midnight,
He walks still streets, home past illuminated
Walls, basilicas and towers striped
Like his shirts, black on white.
He enjoys his inheritance of this Renaissance city,
That Botticelli wife, conniving at being just pretty.

Alan Ross

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Three Letters

Prague, Budapest, Berlin

A Visa for Kafka

By Goronwy Rees

Often many long years must pass before the ear is ready for some stories. But human beings must die—like our parents and indeed everything which we love and fear—before we can understand them properly. FRANZ KAFKA

EVER SINCE Mr. Khrushchev succeeded Mr. Malenkov, Sovietologists in the Western World have carefully assembled and fitted together, as in some elaborate jigsaw puzzle, the evidences of a thaw in the ice-bound wastes of the Stalinist world. They have tried to measure the changes of temperature of the melting waters, plot its variations over the vast surfaces of that frozen universe, and chart the course of the ice-floes as they detached themselves from their arctic mainland and pursued their way towards a warmer climate. Like patient geographers, they have tried to provide an accurate map of what was once almost unknown territory, carefully registered the changes in its vegetation, young green shoots springing up where once there was only ice and then as suddenly nipped in the bud by some cold air from the north, warm and healing tides breaking on shores where once nothing could live. Most of all, perhaps, they have tried to solve the problem of whether whatever changes have happened are really final and irreversible, and whether they have disturbed only the face of the waters or their lower depths as well, so that in those polar regions nothing can ever be again quite what it was before.

Among the mass of material which patient enquiry and research have placed at their disposal, one small but perhaps not insignificant piece of evidence may be found in the curious story of how one of the greatest European writers, Franz Kafka, once again made for himself a resting place, not only in his native city, Prague, or his native country, Czechoslovakia, but even further afield, in Moscow or the Ukraine, or many other parts of the Communist world from which he had been so long expelled, at one time, it would have seemed, finally and forever.

For who would have thought that the Soviet Union or her satellites would ever have exposed their citizens to the risk of the kind of infection which can be caught from Kafka, of a view of life in which every moment is a source of innumerable and endless ethical and intellectual complexities, in which every event has so many facets that we can never rightly profess to have grasped them all, or perhaps not even one of them, because each, like one of Leibniz's monads, is so bewilderingly coloured by the reflection of all the others? In a Communist society, where men must, if they are to survive, submit themselves to the most brutal of simplifications, what time or justification can there be for all the doubts, hesitations, perplexities, deceptions offered to anyone who follows one of Kafka's heroes along his tortured path through life or through the dense labyrinth of problems he must penetrate before he can find even the feeblest ray of light to guide him on his way—and then only to mislead? What relation have the stumblings of Joseph K. to the confident onward march of history or to the obstacles which are so easily surmounted by any proletarian hero?

That Kafka should be admitted, on any terms, to the Communist literary canon is in itself a sufficiently surprising phenomenon. It is also a fascinating and intriguing one because it has so many odd and ambiguous aspects that sometimes one cannot help feeling that it is an incident out of one of his own novels and that somewhere in the shades it inspires a reflection of one of his own delicate, ironical, and anguished smiles. It is as if K. had been dug up out of his grave and had found himself canonised.

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THIS IS INDEED one's first reaction when in the streets of Prague to-day one occasionally glimpses, among the advertisements on the hoardings of theatrical and other events, a poster-sized photograph of Kafka looking down at one. It makes no attempt to catch the eye and, by way of explanation, has no legend, except, in large letters at its foot, the name: FRANZ KAFKA. He is dressed in the impeccably bourgeois costume, velours hat, high white collar, dark suit and black overcoat, which his father used to choose for him out of the stock in his warehouse, and slim and almost debonair he is standing against the background of the Kinsky Palace, which once housed Hermann Kafka's shop and where Kafka himself once attended the German *gymnasium*. There is something inexpressibly elegant and distinguished, like his own prose, in his stance and his attitude, in his smile, in his eyes which gaze at one as from some immense distance, which is more than the distance of time. What on earth is he doing here, one wonders, among the somewhat faded frivolities of Novotny's Prague, wedged between a poster advertising *Rose Marie* and another of the amenities of the Park of Rest and Culture?

The poster says nothing to enlighten one. It is certain that it attracts the attention of very few of the passers-by who look up at the hoardings, and it is probable that either the poster or the name means less to them than, for instance, the announcements on the hoardings of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. For Shakespeare, after all, belongs this year to all the world, but Kafka, as in his lifetime, to nobody. Here in his native city he looks down on one like an alien; that was what he was in his life and it is as an alien that he has been re-admitted.

THE POSTER is, of course, an advertisement for the Kafka exhibition which is taking place this month in Prague, but it was only after several enquiries that I was able to discover where it was and how I was to get there. I began to be affected by the sense of frustration that K. felt in his search for the Castle; though the exhibition might be of the greatest interest to myself, I was not to think that it would be made easy for me to visit it.

From all this one might have assumed that both Kafka and the exhibition were a matter of indifference to everyone in Prague except myself. But again one would have been wrong, for in fact the exhibition has only come about as a result of much argument and bitter polemics, and indeed its very existence represents for some people an important victory over Novotny's régime and a significant advance in the process of de-Stalinisation which Czechoslovakia is now experiencing.

In the circumstances of a Communist state, one ought not to be surprised that for some people the politics of such a victory, if indeed it was a real victory and not merely a sham one designed to divert attention from more immediately practical affairs, should seem of more importance than its purely literary aspects, or that the controversy regarding the precise terms on which Kafka should be re-admitted to Prague was not of a kind to deepen one's understanding of him. What had Kafka to do with the kind of literary criticism or discussion for which the only relevant criterion is how far a writer or an artist serves some political or social purpose? He would no doubt have agreed that art is not a sufficient end in itself and is significant only in so far as it is the reflection of a struggle which cannot be described in purely artistic terms; but the kind of struggle he had in mind when he said that "art is a form of prayer," a wrestling with an angel, was a very different one from any that is being fought in Czechoslovakia at the present time. Thus, once again, what was Kafka doing in Prague to-day?

If one wants an answer to this question, the most natural place to look for it would be in the proceedings of the conference on the subject of Kafka which took place last year at Liblice, outside Prague, for the conference was the indispensable preliminary to the holding of the Kafka exhibition, and the holding of the exhibition was the natural consequence of the conference. But here again the answer to the question is not as easy to find as one might expect; like the answer to many questions in Prague, it seems to lie tantalisingly near and yet beyond one's reach. A report of the conference's proceedings, in Czech, has been published and is on display in the exhibition; there it is, in its glass showcase, together with copies of Kafka's published works, both in the German original and in Czech translation, but none of these publications is available in any bookshop in Prague. Various explanations are offered for this. Kafka, it is said, is now so enormously popular that any book by or about him is instantly sold out, and booksellers are anxiously waiting to renew their stocks but so far have not been able to do so.

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On the other hand, one is equally told that Kafka is, after all, a German and not a Czech writer, and booksellers are naturally reluctant to hold stocks of books for which there is, in the Czech city of Prague, very little demand. There is also a German version of the proceedings of the Kafka conference but publication has been delayed and this also is not yet available.

Gradually one begins to have the impression that the struggle to rehabilitate Kafka has taken place in some shadow world which is not accessible to the ordinary man. No one can be quite certain what blows have been struck or at what targets they have been directed. The general public, if it is interested, or even the individual lover of literature, will find it difficult to discover what the struggle is about or indeed whether any real struggle has taken place at all. Once again, one has the slightly eerie feeling that the debate about Kafka takes place in the kind of world which Kafka himself has made peculiarly his own; that is to say, a world in which nothing is precisely what it seems.

Yet personal reports of the Liblice conference make it clear that blows were struck and that some wounded deeply. It was attended by about fifty or sixty Marxist German scholars from Czechoslovakia itself and also from Austria, East and West Germany, France and Italy, and the discussion opened with an address which somewhat dogmatically affirmed that Kafka is significant primarily as a witness to the sickness and collapse of capitalism. Dr. Eduard Goldstücker, the eminent German scholar from the Charles University, declared however that it was impossible to find in Kafka, as some critics have tried to do, a concealed or repressed Communist, or even socialist, whom death alone had prevented from finding his true vocation. Younger critics claimed that Kafka was important and significant to-day, not as a critic of capitalism or as a forerunner of Communism, but as an enemy of that spirit of inhumanity, bureaucracy, and arbitrariness which revealed itself in Stalinism and must never be allowed to revive; Kafka's works are a permanent warning against a new form of Stalinist state. The distinguished Marxist critic, Ernst Fischer, from Vienna, went even further when he said that Kafka should be rehabilitated, not for any political reason, but as a great European writer who, like Proust and Joyce, should now be granted a "permanent visitor's visa to the socialist countries."

An interested, if silent, spectator of these proceedings was Gustav Janouch, whose father had worked in the same insurance office in Prague as Kafka, who as a boy had accompanied him on his walks through the city, and who has left a record of what they said to each other in his admirable little book, *Conversations with Kafka*. Mr. Janouch, indeed, though silent, was in a sense a key witness in the debate; for his book makes it clear that Kafka, so far from being a Communist or a socialist, or merely a critic of capitalism who was himself one of the victims of its own limitations, had seen in the Russian Revolution one more and most extreme manifestation of that universal spirit of evil which was released by the First World War; as, for instance:

> At the end of every truly revolutionary movement there appears a Napoleon Bonaparte.

Or:

> As a flood spreads wider and wider, the water becomes shallower and dirtier. The Revolution evaporates and leaves behind only the slime of a new bureaucracy. The chains of tormented mankind are made out of red tape.

Or:

> The war, the revolution in Russia, and the misery of the whole world seems to me like a flood of evil. It is an inundation. The war has opened the flood-gates of chaos. The buttresses of human existence are collapsing. Historical development is no longer determined by the individual but by the masses. We are shoved, rushed, swept away. We are the victims of history.

In a Communist world, such ideas are dangerous, an invisible worm which eats at the heart of the rose. And they lead to even more dangerous conclusions; for in private some delegates to the conference did not hesitate to say that Kafka himself did not matter, what was at issue was the question of freedom itself, and that the writers of Czechoslovakia now knew that without civil liberties either the freedom of art or "freedom for Franz Kafka" was an illusion; their object was to create "an enlightened, liberal Marxism."

To no one is such language more detestable than Herr Ulbricht; he has built a Great Wall of China round his decrepit empire to keep it out and his subjects in. So it was inevitable that the delegates from the German Democratic Republic should have solemnly protested against the course which the conference had taken, have

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warned against the dangers of Titoism and even worse, to which it opened the way, have repeated the thesis that Kafka was acceptable only as a critic of a decaying order of society, himself half-way to Communism and if the *Conversations with Kafka* seemed to contradict this, it was because they were not authentic evidence of what Kafka himself really believed. But these views, it appears, met with little sympathy, and both Dr. Goldstücker himself and his young supporters continued to insist that Mr. Janouch had in fact correctly recorded Kafka's ideas. And in the exhibition (for which Dr. Goldstücker himself has been largely responsible) the little book has its own place among all the other documents which have been collected to illustrate Kafka's life.

THE EXHIBITION is on view in the Strahov, the monastery founded in 1140 by the Czech Prince Vladislav, which now, magnificently restored, houses the Museum of Czech Literature. High above Prague on the left bank of the Moldau river, the Strahov, with its baroque halls and library, its marvellous treasures of illuminated manuscripts and incunabula and rare editions, its cool arcaded cloisters, is of such beauty that any visitor might easily be tempted to forget Kafka in its long bright vistas and its dim secluded silences. And indeed few visitors to the Strahov are there for the sake of Kafka and there is very little to draw attention to his presence; only a discreet arrow pointing to the entrance to a small gallery off the entrance hall, where the by now familiar poster, with its aloof yet welcoming smile, stands ready to greet you. Most of the visitors pass him by. They prefer to proceed to the memorials of Czech literature, from which Kafka as a German writer is of course excluded, which are preserved here, and the documents illustrating the influence of Russian on Czech literature; but no debt is acknowledged to the language of Kafka and Rilke.

Yet, inside the exhibition, Kafka's presence becomes almost physically palpable. His life unrolls itself before one in documents, manuscripts, newspaper cuttings, school and university certificates, his own first contributions to the German language newspaper *Bohemia*, Milena Jesenská's obituary of him on the occasion of his death, in fact the only Czech obituary of him which appeared. Some of the exhibits throw a slightly unexpected light on the lonely, self-lacerated figure of the diaries and the novels; Dr. Kafka, for instance, introducing a group of Yiddish actors to a German-Jewish audience in Prague or Dr. Kafka and two friends photographed gaily smiling in the cockpit of a photographer's model of an early aeroplane.

MOST OF ALL it is the admirable collection of photographs which brings him and his life most closely home to one; the little town in South Bohemia where his father was born, which conjures up visions of all those country scenes in Kafka's work which have so disquieting and sensual a closeness to the soil; Hermann Kafka, tall, burly, broad-shouldered, in top-coat and silk hat, outside his warehouse in the Kinsky Palace, the image of everything from which Kafka felt himself to be excluded, of those who are *dans le vrai*; the old Jewish ghetto, destroyed at the beginning of this century, whose presence lingers on so powerfully in Kafka's stories long after all trace of it has vanished; the little quarry outside Prague where Joseph K. is supposed to have met his terrible death, dying "like a dog, as if the shame of it would outlive him"; Prague itself, with its gardens and palaces, its gothic and baroque and rococo architecture, the dizzily flying buttresses of its church, its narrow alleys and shadowed streets and quiet courts of impregnable silence, as if the huddle of houses beneath the Castle concealed something cruel and dark and evil whose presence eddies out throughout the city: the concentration camps where Kafka's own family and his race and those whom he loved were exterminated. All these compose a marvellous magic-lantern picture of the world out of which Kafka's stories grew, and all the ghosts from the past seem here unexpectedly fresh and vital and alive because their essence has been so vividly captured in what he wrote.

Here one becomes more sharply aware than ever of one of the central paradoxes of Kafka's life; that this man who in his own words felt so immeasurably isolated and alone, as alone "as the Wandering Jew," should be so indissolubly identified with the life of this city in which he lived, should belong so inalienably to Prague, so that in its streets one can even to-day find all the sombre chiaroscuro of his novels, their profound abysses of gloom and despair suddenly broken by piercing shafts of sunlight, and his presence is so vivid that even the most commonplace events and things assume an aspect which is both sinister and holy. It is so strong that in the streets of the marvellous city one can hardly see a dog without wondering what strange in-

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vestigations he may be pursuing or believe that, even yet, after so many centuries, it has come to an end of all the metamorphoses it has experienced.

BUT WHICH CITY? For Prague is many, both historically and topographically; it is a Czech city, a German city, a Jewish city, a German-Jewish city, a liberated city, a Communist city, a captive city, a European city in which all these elements live side by side and are never finally fused with one another, and even though to-day the Czech element is dominant it does not and cannot neutralise all the others and at any turn in the street one can walk across a boundary which separates one world from another.

If one walks out of the Kafka exhibition and crosses the cool and cobbled courtyard of the Strahov, under trees which are green and fresh-smelling after the heat of Prague, their branches tracing arabesques against the mouldering façade of a baroque church, one passes through a low vaulted passage to the gravelled terrace beyond and there in the sunshine one looks down on the whole of Prague, divided by the Moldau winding under the thirteen bridges that join its two banks and carrying on its waters the reflections of the statues of the twelve kings of Bohemia who from the Charles bridge look down into them. The city lies in a shallow saucer and, from here on its north-western lip, in the evening, it fills with light like a golden bowl, the façades of its buildings are a pale honey colour, copper-green cupolas float on the tide of light and the steep hill at one's feet is clothed with orchards and gardens, in a green sea of foliage that in spring is starred white with blossom. On your left is the great walled fortress of the Hradschin, a city within and above a city, where the slim soaring Gothic spires of the St. Vitus Cathedral prick the sky, and in cobbled courtyard after courtyard, palaces, churches, halls and galleries shine like baroque images of power and glory above the city which crouches at their feet as if before a conqueror. Here the Hapsburgs ruled the heart of Europe, here Heydrich exercised his terrible protectorate over Bohemia and Moravia; here to-day another alien power has installed itself.

This is the Castle of the Germans who ruled Prague and created much of it that is most beautiful, and for all its beauty it is the source of the cruel and oppressive spirit which pervades the city. But it is not the Prague of Kafka, even if it provided him with that image of the Castle from which authority speaks in so harsh and unintelligible a voice. Nor will one find his city in the Prague of the Czechs below the Castle, on the other side of the river, in its broad commercial thoroughfares and teeming business centre, even if here he worked from day to day and from year to year in his insurance office, with that meticulous attention to every detail which was for him a form of ritual, or even in the streets of what was once the Jewish quarter, by the Altstädterring dominated by its Gothic clock tower and the spires of the Teynkirche, though Kafka once lived here and every stone seems shaped and carved into the fantastic and grotesque forms of his novels.

BUT KAFKA'S Prague is a city not of stone but the imagination, a spiritual ghetto which could provide him with neither home nor family and was simply a setting, convoluted and involved, for his own loneliness and alienation, the ghetto of the German Jews in Prague who were not Germans and were not Czech and were assimilable by neither. The old ghetto of Prague, which was its physical counterpart, and where Kafka spent his childhood, has disappeared, but for Kafka it lived on, and for him its dark shadows fell across every street of the city:

> In us all it still lives—the dark corners, the secret alleys, shuttered windows, squalid courtyards, noisy pubs and sinister inns. We walk through the broad streets of the newly-built town. But our steps and our glances are uncertain. Inside we tremble just as before in the ancient streets of our misery. Our heart knows nothing of the slum clearance which has taken place. The unhealthy old Jewish town within us is far more real than the new hygienic town around us. With our eyes open we walk through a dream: ourselves only a ghost of a vanished age.

And to-day in Prague that vanished age of the insanitary old Jewish ghetto seems even more physically distant, yet closer to us, than it did to Kafka, for now not only its buildings but the entire race of those who inhabited them has been destroyed; of the Jewish community of Prague only 3,500 still remain, and of their eight synagogues six are now museums. But by a kind of miracle two of its most characteristic and interesting memorials are still preserved. The first is the 12th-century Old-New Synagogue in the Josefstadt, the oldest synagogue in the world and the only Gothic synagogue which is still in religious use, with the Torah in its receptacle

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in the altar at its eastern end, its pulpit enclosed by a beautiful 17th-century wrought iron grille and, above, its vaulted roof whose ribs follow a fantastic irregular plan so as to avoid any resemblance to the True Cross. The other, nearby, is the old Jewish cemetery of Prague, where twenty thousand Jews lie buried, their bodies lying one above the other, the tombstones huddled and crowded together in disorder on each grave, like a stunted forest, because the Jews were prohibited from acquiring more land in order to find more space for their dead. On its southern edge stands a 17th-century synagogue which has been converted into a memorial to the eighty thousand Jews of Bohemia and Moravia who were exterminated by Hitler in Theresienstadt and elsewhere; their names, which include those of Kafka's three sisters and also of Milena Jesenská, whom he once loved, form a mosaic of tiny letters that cover the whole of the interior.

Thus the old Jewish ghetto in Prague has died twice, but in the little synagogue and in the cemetery its spirit is still alive; it is one of the ironies of history that we owe their preservation primarily to Hitler himself who, at the height of his power, decided that he would turn Prague into a Jewish museum which would never let the world forget the evil spirits which had been exorcised in the purifying fire of the final solution. But even if these memorials of a dead society had not survived the holocaust in which it perished, its spirit would still live and does still live in Kafka's novels and stories; it was a spirit of infinite subtlety, expert in all the mysteries of exegesis and theological casuistry, the servant of the law and the prophets, tirelessly seeking the truth which, even in exile and desolation, may finally lead to salvation. It is this spirit which still haunts the courts and alleys and tenements of the Josefstadt and it is this spirit which is now being offered a visitor's visa in the person of Kafka.

IF ONE WALKS in the silent courts which lie off the broad streets that were driven through the old ghetto, where one's footsteps, especially at night, echo on the cobbles and no other footsteps seem near, one becomes aware of a different silence from that to which Kafka listened so intently. It is a new kind of silence, which reigns to-day in the hearts of the cities of the Communist world.

In Prague to-day, at its commercial centre, on what was once the Wenczelasplatz and is now the Václavské Náměstí (for Kafka's Prague seems to have vanished all the more completely because its German names have been replaced by Czech ones) and in the streets adjoining it, one finds just as much activity, and just as dense, or even denser crowds as at the centre of any western city, though to one's pleasure not the same intolerable pressure of traffic, so that it is of the teeming presence of human beings that one is chiefly conscious. They wander slowly in the sunlight under the trees, form little groups which stare into the windows of any shops offering consumer durables, washing machines, television sets, electrical appliances, queue before vegetable and fruit stalls, crowd into self-service stores and delicatessen shops; one might be in any western city, though the presence of the country seems much closer here, in the peasant dress of country women and the fresh produce they offer for sale, and an Englishman at least cannot help being astonished and delighted by the number of book shops. Even in their clothes the great majority of the passers-by are much closer to a bourgeois than a proletarian standard. One has, for the moment at least, the impression that here the brave new world of Communism is a genuinely going concern and in its outward manifestations uncommonly like the brave new world of capitalism.

NO DOUBT THIS IS to some extent an illusion, because according to official figures the Czech economy is stagnating and its targets for industrial production are largely unfulfilled. The rate of industrial growth and the rise in labour productivity have declined by a half since 1960; the growth of national income fell from an average of 8·5 per cent per annum between 1950 and 1960 to 0·7 per cent in 1962. But perhaps in Prague these effects are concealed because Prague is an overcrowded city, which attracts the same pressure of population as any western metropolis, and young people are actively discouraged from marrying and founding a family here. Certainly at the centre of the city, on a summer day in the sunlight, a visitor might be tempted to think that here is a boom city and this impression is increased by the very large numbers of foreign tourists who crowd its hotels and bars and restaurants and nightclubs.

But if one wanders even the shortest distance away from the crowded main streets in the centre one enters a kind of desert of silence

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and desolation, broad thoroughfares in which nothing stirs, long mournful avenues that seem to lead to nowhere, houses that are empty and deserted; because of the absence of motor traffic, a heavy silence seems to hang in the air, broken only by the distant rumble of a tram, and one might walk for miles without meeting a soul. Only if one steps off the street for a moment into one of the somewhat slatternly beer shops which break its monotony one may find, at any time of day, in its stale and smoky atmosphere, every table occupied by men who appear to have no other occupation than slowly and morosely to consume their beer. The air here is precisely that of one of those "sinister inns" of which Kafka speaks.

To a visitor from western Europe the timeless, listless air of these empty streets strikes all the more strangely because, even against his wish, he will have somewhere within him an image of the Communist world as something which is new, productive, and alive, a world of the young and vigorous, each day achieving fresh triumphs and conquests, forging ahead in the race to overtake and surpass the most advanced capitalist countries. He may regard such an image with suspicion, or distaste, or even fear; he will find it very hard not to be affected by it at all. But in Prague at least he will find very little to correspond with it; partly perhaps because he will see little or no sign of that frenzy of new building activity which he is accustomed to in almost any large city of the western world. For this indeed he may not be ungrateful; the silence and peace of streets which are empty of traffic, of a city whose profile has for decades not been altered, for better or worse, by new construction, can be welcome to one whose ears have become attuned to the tumult of modern western cities. If only, he may think, London or Oxford, Rome or Paris, had been preserved from the touch of change as Prague has, how beautiful they would still be. And yet he may shiver, as at some unexpected chill in the air, as if this stillness of the city were in fact the stillness of the grave.

The visitor will find this curious quality of changelessness repeating itself in other forms; in his hotel, for instance, where he will find his servants more numerous and more ancient than elsewhere and more accustomed to provide a kind of service which has become an anachronism in the western world; where in the dining-room flocks of waitresses, plump and ruddy as if they had come straight off the land, in black dresses and frilled white aprons, their trays held high aloft on upturned palms, pass in endless procession like figures on some Egyptian frieze, under the eyes of an inexorable head waiter in snowy white waistcoat and tailcoat; where in the evenings couples dance to a string orchestra playing *Down Mexico Way* and the *jeunesse dorée* of Prague self-consciously perform a modified version of the Twist in which vitality has been wholly sacrificed to decorum. Such things, he knows, are luxuries reserved for the very few; yet he will find it curious that the style adopted by this élite is one which long ago vanished from the western world, unless perhaps in some remote unfashionable spa which the way of the world has passed by. It is not the future which beckons to him here; it is the past. Perhaps, in fifty years' time, when the western world has been made unrecognisable by scientific and technological change, the social historian or archaeologist of manners will repair to these hotels of eastern Europe to discover traces of a style of living which has long ago vanished elsewhere.

War and revolution have spared Prague so much of the material destruction they have inflicted on other cities that it is easy to believe that Kafka, forty years after his death, would find very little change in the physical aspect of his native city, if he were to use the visa which has now been granted to him. But in all other respects he would find it completely transformed, most of all because it could not offer him anything of the kind of spiritual, ethical, and intellectual nourishment on which he fed. All this has now vanished without a trace, except in his own works and those of a few other German Jewish writers who are now mostly forgotten. They came from a world which seemed to share something of all the cultures of which, here at the centre of Europe, Prague was the meeting point; it was a world which was dominated by its use of German as a means of expression, to which they gave something of the hardness of their own Czech accents, and by Jewish ways of thought which were closer to those of eastern rather than western Jewry. Writing in the June number of *Merkur*, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of Kafka's death, Johannes Urzidil, himself when nineteen a friend of Kafka's and a mourner at his grave, says of that German Jewish world of Prague: "We were a special kind of Austrian, a special kind of Ger-

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man, and a special kind of Czech, and most of Kafka's friends were in addition a special kind of Jew." It was as if each element in this amalgam of cultures was changed and transmuted by the presence of the others, so that they acquired different characteristics from those they had elsewhere; the result was something unique which is now irretrievably lost. In no other work can the particular air of this culture be breathed so unmistakably as in Kafka's, though this is by no means the most important thing about them. But it pervades all his works like a special tang or flavour, which gives them a sharpness which is all their own. It is the flavour of a world which has vanished beyond recall, part of the enormous price which Europe has had to pay for the course its development has taken during this century, and European culture is as a result thinner and weaker, as if one of its most characteristic strains had been bred out.

ON THE LAST DAY of my visit to Prague I went again to the exhibition in the Strahov. Perhaps that day someone had decided it was time some effort should be made to draw attention to it; clumsily and amateurishly produced signs directing one towards it had suddenly appeared at the tram stop, at the arch where you enter the Strahov and in its shaded echoing courtyard. But it did not attract many visitors, who preferred on the whole the Great Moravian exhibition in the Castle on the Hradschin, designed to show that the Czechs and Slovaks had a native culture long before any foreign conqueror had imposed his own.

But that day one small group conducted by a guide did come to see Kafka. They were in a hurry but they were Americans and had that thirst for information which is one of their most attractive traits. "Please explain," one of them said politely. "You say that Kafka is a famous Czech writer, but it appears that he wrote in German. How do you explain this?"

The guide looked slightly embarrassed. "Well, you see, Kafka belonged to that class of Prague Jews which spoke and wrote in German. Of course, there were other Jews who spoke and wrote Czech, but they were the poor Jews; Kafka's father was a merchant and was rich and therefore Kafka wrote in German."

"Are any of his relatives still living in Prague?"

"No," she said, and then as if this seemed inadequate, she added:

"You see, the Prague Jews were exterminated." She said it in the neutral tones of a guide who is simply offering one more item of information.

"But you say he is a very popular writer?"

"Oh yes, he has become very popular. There was recently a film of one of his novels. They say his books were greatly influenced by the architecture of Prague. Now you must hurry on to the Great Moravian exhibition which shows that long before the Germans came. . . ."

KAFKA'S WORLD has indeed been destroyed. If one looks through a list of his friends and acquaintances in Prague one will find few indeed who escaped death, exile, extermination in the concentration camps. The society out of which he came quite truly died like Joseph K., like a dog.

So that if now he is offered a "permanent visa to the socialist countries," it will be as an alien that he will return. And if he is to become acclimatised in the new kind of society which has grown up in Czechoslovakia, it will only be after he has been tamed and domesticated to Marxist requirements, for otherwise he might prove a very unwelcome visitor indeed to those who now rule there. Yet no writer was ever less adapted to such treatment than Kafka. Perhaps it is more likely that now, as before, his works will continue to fructify in silence until Central Europe will once again be ready for what he has to say, like one of those stories which the ear takes a very long time to be ready for. Perhaps then at last his spirit may find in Prague a home which he never found there during his lifetime.

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George Mikes

Alien's Return

Letter from Budapest

"WE ARE POOR. We have nothing, except our high standard of living. We live about three times as well as we can afford. This is the real *Wirtschaftswunder*." It was the manager of a state-enterprise who spoke.

"It was easy for the Germans," he continued. "They have raw materials. They have the Ruhr. They work like hell. What's so miraculous about re-building a country with outside help, natural riches, and hard work? Look at us. We have absolutely nothing to boast of, no one helped us—on the contrary—and we didn't really work. Yes sir, this is the real Economic Miracle."

It may or may not be the real economic miracle, but it certainly *was* the real Budapest as I remembered it: witty, cynical, happy. Its happiness is its most conspicuous quality. But why *should* this town be so happy?—you ask yourself. If I had come back after a long absence without knowing anything of what had happened in the last quarter of a century, I should be hard put to it to understand the reasons for this cheerfulness. The town is shabby and dilapidated; walls are crumbling and you often have the feeling that a building must certainly collapse on you before you have time to hurry by. Wear-and-tear and lack of repairs compete with the unrestored or half-restored damage caused by various upheavals. (Politics, by the way, are closely connected with repairs: the damage caused by the 1956 revolt was repaired, wherever possible, in great haste; but damage caused by the 1944–45 siege is regarded by the régime as honourable scars, so the haste to put *this* right is much less conspicuous.)

Budapest people will boast of the elegance of their Váci-ucca which, I am assured, compares most favourably with the main shopping streets of Prague, Bucharest, or even Moscow, but is embarrassingly provincial compared with Bond Street, Fifth Avenue or even Vienna's Kärnter Strasse. They will take you to the Gerbeaud—once upon a time one of the world's famous *confiseries*, now called the Vörösmarty—and ask you with moist eyes: "Isn't this exactly as it used to be in the good old days?" Whether the old days were really so good or not, is not strictly to the point; you mumble a few polite words and refrain from pointing out that the place is rather shabby now, its carpets a little threadbare and its clients somewhat weather-beaten. (Although its cakes and pastries are up to the best standards—not an unimportant aspect when passing judgment on a *confiserie*.) "Well," an old friend will wink at you, "what do you think of the women of Budapest?" You wink back roguishly and keep the sad truth to yourself—that you had quite failed to notice these famous beauties. You are, of course, twenty-six years older than you were when you left this city and not *every* woman is a beauty in your eyes any more. But every other woman still is. If the women of Budapest have become less alluring, it is because their clothes are made of third-rate material and they have much less time to spend in front of their mirrors. No shame to them—on the contrary; but the fact remains that these women are not what they used to be. Of course, you see many improvements, too: happy, healthy children in red and blue uniforms and no beggars and no unemployed with hunger and fear in their eyes. On the other hand there is a great deal of poverty, low wages, and in almost all families the women, too, have to work to maintain some sort of standard. So, you repeat the puzzling question: "Why are these people so happy and so pleased with life?"

HOW DOES A MAN who has been driven mad with toothache feel when the tooth comes out? The Hungarians lived through an age of police terror and to-day there is no police terror; a few years ago, no one would dare to reveal his thoughts even to his wife and children but

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to-day people can speak freely on almost any subject; papers used to be full of the glorious achievements of heavy industry and the wondrous deeds of stakhanovites, but no one could buy a razor blade that really shaved off stubble, or a ball of string that did not break when jerked. To-day almost all consumer goods are available and even if unaccountable shortages occur from time to time (and even if I found their toothpaste a little peculiar and their after-shave lotion a curious mixture of paraffin and petrol), most things are passable and improving fast. The country used to be a prison inducing a maddening claustrophobia in most people—but to-day they may—and do—go abroad on a meagre allowance or often without money if they are lucky enough to have relations abroad. (This particular relaxation is referred to in common parlance by Western relations who have to offer hospitality to the penniless travellers, as "Kádár's vengeance.") In short: they are happy because they do not know how badly off they are by the standards of the spoilt and affluent West. They are happy because they are travelling in the right direction; and travelling to an exciting place can be, as we all know, much more exciting than the actual arrival.

To achieve this euphoria, the régime and the *intelligentsia* had to come to a complicated compromise. After long tribulation, repression, a wave of terror—and sullen, contemptuous silence on the side of the intellectuals—things have brightened up beyond anyone's dreams. But the intellectuals needed a theory—some sort of rationalisation—and so we have arrived at the *Era of Belittling*. Some former sympathisers with the revolution would say: "We thought it was one of the major events of history. Something like 1848. But, of course, it was nothing like it. The tragedy is that it was unimportant." Or: "It was a mistake. A glorious mistake, a mistake we may be proud of, yet a mistake it was. We would have achieved more, and more quickly, without 1956." Or the chief argument: "Yes, it started well but it could have turned fascist...."

On the other hand, it is bad form to express loyalty to the régime. This is not expected from anyone. One may even criticise administration, crowded trams, litter in the streets, major blunders of bureaucracy as long as one's not rude to the Russians and the Red Army—who are "touchy Orientals"—and as long as one does not try to "undermine Socialism." This licensed opposition, this tolerated grumbling does not undermine the régime; on the contrary, being a safety valve, it is one of its new devices. Since grumbling is permitted, people grumble much less, particularly when talking to a foreign visitor. Local patriotism is one of the strong, primitive forces of the human soul, and most people of Budapest have turned propagandists for their city. They will not boast of the achievements of the steel industry, nor will they mention collective farms; but they will sing the praises of their good life and the beauties and pleasures of Budapest. Former revolutionaries tried to convince me that all was well, and when I reminded them of the two or three years they had spent in gaol, they replied with a broad grin: "But do you know how much better the food is in a Hungarian prison than in an average English restaurant?" (A small minority are counter-propagandists: bitter enemies of everything. Nothing is good enough for them, all Party members are knaves and fools, nothing has improved in the slightest degree since the Rákosi era, and anyone who has a word of praise for the situation is either an idiot or a traitor.)

Nor are you constantly reminded of the fact that you are in a Communist country. Perhaps if you live in Hungary and read the Communist Party paper *Népszabadság* every day, you think very differently. Perhaps if you go to the country and talk to the peasants at the collective farms, your impressions change radically. But as long as you stay in Budapest and if instead of *Népszabadság* you buy the *Times* daily (for sale in the international hotels but strictly for foreign guests only) and meet people who work on those Party papers, who run the State enterprises, teach or study at the universities or have jobs as civil servants—in other words, meet the people you are likely to meet anywhere—your impression is that it is the middle class who runs Hungary. Sociologists may explain that it is a middle-class type of life which necessarily develops for people in certain positions: certain jobs simply turn you into a middle-class person. But sociologists are once again wrong. It is not Djilas' New Class that seems to run the country; it is the good old middle-class, the old-fashioned *bourgeoisie*, with some changes and modifications, some gains and some losses. Public and private life is permeated with the spirit of old middle-class life, with all its civilised forms, polish, and tolerance; but also with its old-

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fashioned snobberies, habits of saying *te* (the equivalent of French *tu*) to some people but not to others; pride in new titles and a sneaking reverence for the old ones. This is Socialism, you say meditatively; perhaps when Communism is at last achieved, they will wear bowler hats and start fighting duels again.

I WAS WATCHING Budapest and knew that Budapest—or at least a section of it—was watching me, its prodigal son who had now returned with a British passport in his pocket and some outlandish ideas in his head. I must not be caught up, I warned myself, in a web of emotions. I could not, of course, judge this city as I could judge Beirut or Vladivostok, but I must try to keep a level head. Nor must I blame Budapest—I told myself—because I could not possibly find what I am really in search of: my youth. I knew all along my route that I was not driving only eastward in space but also backward in time. I wanted to meet that slender youth with thick, fairish hair who used to dwell here, but that youth has disappeared—with his silhouette and, indeed, most of his hair—and has become the past. This, if I want to be fair, is not the fault of Budapest; not even of Rákosi.

Memories haunted me. And I was keen on checking up on some of my early impressions. Is Budapest really so beautiful? Even after Rio de Janeiro, Hongkong, Istanbul? Well, the city reminds you of those wonderfully preserved, middle-aged ladies who look beautiful at a distance. Look around you from the hills of Buda at the famous view, with the Danube bridges, the Parliament building, Margaret Island, the surrounding hills, Fishermen's Bastion and the Coronation Church, and—Istanbul or no Istanbul—you will enjoy one of the loveliest sights in Europe. The dilapidated, crumbling buildings down below are the good lady's wrinkles and the bags under her eyes.

How big is Budapest, I asked myself, with some trepidation. "After many years in London," a friend had told me, "it has shrunk incredibly." I do not agree with him. A city of two million people is not tiny by any standards. Distances are shorter than in London (particularly if you have to travel from South Norwood to Highgate twice a day); on the other hand if you live in St. John's Wood or Hampstead or Chelsea, you not only live in a huge metropolis but also in a small village. By contrast, Budapest is a village in quite a different way. The magazine editor with whom I had an appointment knew when I arrived that I had just come from a certain government office. "Oh, I rang them," he explained airily, "and the secretary told me that she couldn't put me through to the boss as you were with him." I asked one old friend, a sports-writer, whom I happened to meet in a café, what one used for the public telephones. Was it a one-forint-piece? No, one needed a special disc, he said, and gave me one. Three days later, another friend asked whom I had met in Budapest? I reeled off a few names and then I mentioned my sports-writer friend; he nodded: "Oh, yes, he gave you a telephone-disc." The size of a city has less to do with its acreage, it seems, than with the rapidity of its gossip.

Another question which I meant to check up on was the width of Budapest streets. Were those streets really wide or was my memory cheating me? No, those streets were wide enough, in some respects wider than Regent Street or even the Champs Elysées. Partly because they are quite wide, but mostly because you can *see* them clearly since they are not cluttered up with a constant stream of vehicles. A street which is wide enough is obviously much wider than a wider street which is not wide enough.

I should like to add here that the people of Budapest and even the authorities concerned with tourism love to boast of the terrifying volume of traffic in the capital. Traffic has indeed increased enormously in the last few years, since private people have been allowed to buy cars. Yet Budapest traffic is a trickle by Western standards. Instead of boasting about the speed and density of their traffic, Budapest tourist-offices would be better advised to advertise: Come to Budapest, drive your car in comfort and park it anywhere you like. That would fetch Western visitors. But the people of Budapest would most certainly not agree with this image of their city. They go on dreaming of traffic jams.

WHEN I GOT OUT of my *G.B.*-labelled car and addressed the policeman in impeccable Hungarian, I thought he would be surprised. The truth is that he would have been surprised had I addressed him in any other tongue. Budapest is the only city in the world where people travelling in cars bearing *G.B.*, or *F.*, or *D.*, or *U.S.A.* plates, speak considerably better Hungarian than English, French, West-German, or American.

Pseudo-foreigners, like myself, are welcome.

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Hungary badly needs hard currency and tourism —they remember—has made such a tremendous difference to Spain. It was a stroke of genius when one of Hungary's economic experts discovered that the pound sterling brought in by naturalised Britons is just as good as the currency brought in by those who are British by birth. From this discovery it was only a step to the discovery that even the hard currency brought in *by 1956 refugees* stays hard enough.

Hungary is one of the few countries of the world where foreigners—sham and real—are appreciated, almost revered. To be a foreigner gives you status. The word itself is not derogatory as it is in many other languages: it simply means "a man from abroad" and it has a built-in halo. According to a current joke, when little Moritz—the cheeky and omniscient hero of many anecdotes—is asked what he wants to be when he grows up, he replies: "A foreigner." Well, I have made the grade. I have returned to my old country as a distinguished foreigner: because all foreigners are distinguished in Hungary. I have never succeeded in solving the problem *how* to be an alien; but I certainly know *where* to be an alien.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE at the border, you still see the barbed wire fences and watch-towers and even if these latter are unmanned they give you the impression that you have arrived in a police state. By no means the worst of police states. There are no midnight knocks on the door; people are not whisked off to prison for a careless word or a silly joke; there are no mock trials. In fact, the police seem to have been instructed to be courteous to foreigners, and they are. Yet, a policeman in Hungary still represents sinister powers and is a man of real authority. This is, of course, a heritage from Austro-Hungarian times but the Stalin decade did little to relieve the atmosphere. Policemen—and other officials—still represent power; however small, however ridiculous—it's power. The country is full of these comic little Caesars, toy dictators, oppressive shadow-tyrants who shout at the citizens, tell them off, bully them or, at least, keep them waiting unnecessarily.

Only once did a policeman consider arresting me. I had lost my way somewhere in Buda and arrived at a big square to see the cars in front of me making a peculiar U-turn. I drove straight into the square and was at once stopped by a policeman. He was embarrassed, but sighed with relief when I asked him in Hungarian if I had done anything wrong. Yes, I had, because one was not supposed to drive into that square at all.

"I'm sorry," I said, "I did not see the sign."

"There is no sign," he said. "But you must have seen all the other cars turning back here."

"Yes, I did," I replied, "but I thought they were going somewhere else."

He paused, then said:

"May I see your driving licence?"

"I haven't got it on me."

"Your passport then."

"I haven't got that either."

"Then some other paper of identification."

"I have nothing."

"Well," he said, hardly believing his ears, "in that case I could arrest you."

"Perhaps you could," I agreed.

"Where do you come from?"

"From England."

"And are you telling me that in England one is allowed to drive around without identification papers?"

"Yes, one can. But I am not using this as an excuse. In Hungary one should obey the laws of Hungary. The fact is that I changed my suit this afternoon and forgot to put my driving licence into my pocket. It's my fault. If you come with me to my hotel, I shall show you my driving licence and my passport."

He grew indignant:

"Who ever heard of a policeman going to a hotel to see someone's driving licence?"

"I have. In any case, there are three things you can do. You can let me go. You can come with me and see my papers. Or you can arrest me. If I may offer a word of advice, it might be best to arrest me."

He frowned and seemed perplexed.

"I don't know what rules and regulations you have in England, but in a country like Hungary you must not go around without papers."

"I am surprised to hear you say that. 'A country like Hungary'? This seems to me a very civilised, Western-type country."

"You may go now," he said a little louder.

"Thank you. I see you are a traffic policeman, so would you kindly tell me how to get back to my hotel?"

He did, then saluted, and we parted.

BUREAUCRACY is the other major pest. It is a pest everywhere but perhaps a particular pest in a Socialist state. Even a dissatisfied customer in a grocer's shop cannot with-

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draw his custom: all he can do is to go to another state-owned shop, probably less conveniently situated. Service, by the way, is not universally bad. Ex-grocers keep a certain respect or at least courtesy for their customers —it is in their blood. Ex-soldiers, when they become managers of shops, maintain a certain discipline—with the staff as well as with the customers—and organise things efficiently. Former *AVO*-men regard their new jobs as an extension of their old one. And some others are just being nasty because being nasty gives them satisfaction and improves their digestion. One may complain; but staff are short while customers are abundant. However, the service in restaurants, cafés, and espressos is prompt and polite. Socialism or no socialism, a tip remains a tip.

People are free to complain of bureaucratic excesses and they do make a noise. Bureaucracy is, in fact, the favourite target, and the authorities, as I have said, do not discourage complaints: criticism gives the impression of freedom of speech and, they say, bureaucracy is not an inherent fault in Socialism but is incidental to it. "There are some minor faults," they imply, "it's a matter we are going to look into." The point is that many excesses of bureaucracy are inherent in the system. The great tyranny has disappeared; the small tyranny still strangles life. Let's suppose a man passes his driving test. He is told so and then he is forbidden to drive his car home. He must not drive as an *L*-driver (a *T*-driver in Hungary) because he is no longer a learner; on the other hand, he must not drive as a licensed driver either because no one may drive without his licence in his pocket (he may be arrested if he does) and obviously he has not yet got the document. So he must wait a few days, possibly a whole week. Passing the test has resulted in his losing his right to drive. A minor anomaly, you may say. Of course it is. But it is symptomatic and life is full of similar idiocies.

Hungary—the whole of Eastern Europe—is a region where nothing mechanical works. In America, if you push a button, something happens: a bar of chocolate falls out, a pin-table starts working, a bell rings. Even in Britain: push a button and there is a fair chance that you are not pushing in vain. But mechanical things are a shade more erratic in Hungary. Once I waited for three-quarters of an hour at a petrol pump (there are long queues at the infrequent pumps, especially for the grade named —for some unfathomable reason—"Super") and when my turn at last came, the pump resigned and refused to function. The attendant began to complain and swear and abuse the maintenance people. I told him: "Don't swear. Kick it!" He kicked it and the petrol started flowing. An automatic cigarette machine refused to work in an espresso. The lady in charge explained: "Hooligans pushed in a lot of one-forint coins, just to spoil it for others." A novel type of hooligan, I thought, who spend vast sums in furtherance of their vandalism. But the most pathetic and revealing sign of all was a public telephone which bore the proud legend in huge, red letters: IT WORKS!

YOU ARE BUSY telling yourself for the fiftieth time that the town is shabby and dilapidated, when suddenly a worrying thought strikes you: how shabby and dilapidated are you, yourself? When you talk to a Hungarian teenager and you mention the fact that you knew poets like Attila József or Miklós Radnóti well, they look at you much as an English boy would if you told him that Byron and Shelley used to be chums of yours or you played cricket for Canterbury with Chaucer.

Walking along a street in Buda, you remember Hungary's great humorist, Frederick Karinthy. Here on the corner used to stand the café he visited every day and where, at frequent intervals, he ran up a debt with the head-waiter, being unable to pay his bill. Then you discover, with a start, that the street itself is now called Frederick Karinthy Street. And somewhere else you see another street named after another friend who used to be unable to pay his bill in another café. Yet another street name reminds you that a third friend still owes you five pengoes from the old days but now that he, too, has been turned into a street, you haven't much chance of seeing your money. With the name-giver of a largish square you once had a drunken fight at three a.m. in the City Park and that statue there—so majestic on his pedestal—used to go to bed with one of your girl-friends. It hurt very much at the time—it was certainly not the behaviour you expect from a statue.

Then you get a real shock. One friend of yours has become a *boulevard*. Not just a street, a close, a crescent, or even a square: a *boulevard*. When former friends become streets, that fills you with pride; but when a friend becomes a *boulevard*, you fall silent and think of eternity.

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John Mander

Beyond The Wall: 1964

THREE YEARS after the Wall, what does it feel like to be an East German? Are the seventeen captive millions as intransigently anti-Communist (or at least anti-Ulbricht) as they were three years ago? Or is a majority—as recent reports have claimed—now resigned to its fate, and prepared to make its peace with the régime? The accounts I had read were highly contradictory. Official West German propaganda (of which younger West Germans seem to be heartily sick) continues to proclaim the imminent bankruptcy of its Eastern rival. Some well-meaning publicists, both British and West German, while deploring the Wall's attendant atrocities, have taken the line that, having stabilised the situation, the Wall might be a necessary precondition for "liberalisation." Since liberalisation in East Germany is the precondition for further relaxation in Central Europe (the argument runs) the Wall may even prove "a blessing in disguise." When I was invited, therefore, with a group of British journalists, to tour East Germany this summer, I was not at all sure what I would find. I had last been inside East Germany a month before the Wall went up. The political atmosphere, in that summer of 1961, had been tense, hysterical, sombre. How would Ulbricht's Germany look to the foreign visitor three years later?

I should remark, at this point, that the British are by a long chalk the most favoured visitors to East Germany—for reasons which will become apparent. Indeed, we seven British journalists emerged from ten days of official junketings, receptions, and conducted tours more than a little punch-drunk. A short trot round the *Goethe-Haus* after breakfast, lunch with a Party secretary, an afternoon at Buchenwald (complete with postcards and souvenirs), and an evening of *Der Freischütz* would amount to a stiffish programme at the best of times. Our appointed guides were attentive to a fault; we must see as much of the "GDR" as possible—not neglecting the cultural aspects!—and help correct false impressions put about by the Bonn revanchists. We would see with our own eyes that East Germans were not starving! We could convince ourselves of the "GDR's" remarkable economic progress—with all its implications for trade and peaceful collaboration with the British people! We could satisfy ourselves that East Germany, though it might lag behind West Germany in affluence, at least had no former Nazis in high government positions. "Your government maintains that we do not exist, but you have seen that we do exist, have you not, ha, ha?" To such and similar pleasantries we were treated—we were guests of the government and too polite to interrupt—in generous dosages, at, before, and after meal-times. By the end, physically reduced and alcoholically brain-washed, I suppose most of us would cheerfully have signed away West Berlin, the Paris treaties, and South Vietnam for a good night's sleep.

At any rate, on our last evening in East Berlin, we were ready enough to agree with our hosts that "mutual contacts of this kind are valuable and contribute to peaceful co-existence." I recall wondering feebly whether one should not dissent from some of the implications but let it pass. After all, such contacts *are* valuable—if not quite in the sense intended. We are too easily persuaded—those of us to whom the *Guardian* is daily bread, and the *Observer* meat on Sundays—that East and West, if not yet identical, are converging so rapidly that it is almost impolite to speak of the differences. Yet how strange, how exotic, how totally other that Eastern world can be! It was on the fifth day that one of my companions confessed he could no longer recall the day of the week. The rest of us were not too sure either. Time and space had lost their wonted solidity. Receiving no news of the outside world, except through the medium of our guides, our mental grip on reality had sadly weakened. I never thought to hear such a cry as welcomed a solitary copy of the *Daily Worker* at our hotel in Weimar. For some time we tried to reconstruct the outer world from such slender evidence. I

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think it was several minutes before somebody pointed out that the copy we were studying had been published in London three weeks before.

OF COURSE, THERE IS nothing new about politically guided tours of this kind; they are as old as the October Revolution, and no doubt older (Potemkin!). Yet one is continually taken by surprise. That curious air of fantasy, for instance, that enveloped us by the fifth day. Stern anti-Communists might call it by another name: the Big Lie. Certainly, we were subjected to an unremitting propaganda barrage; and we were in every sense a captive audience. Yet much of what we were told was too plainly self-contradictory to be effective as propaganda. We were told that the *Bundeswehr* is controlled by Nazi revanchists thirsting for nuclear weapons; but also that Federal Germany could not survive a nuclear challenge to the Socialist bloc by half an hour. Why, then, should they be afraid of an enemy so completely vulnerable? Or were they, perhaps, not as afraid as they wished us to suppose? We were told that recognition of East Germany was a precondition of expanded trade. On the other hand: look at our economic successes—all achieved despite non-recognition by the West! Certain plants we visited had been bombed, we were told, "because the Anglo-Americans didn't want them to fall into Russian hands"; others had not been bombed "because the Anglo-Americans wanted to continue to extract profits from them." Yet there seemed no real basis for either statement. We heard less, in Dresden, of the "Anglo-American terror raid" of February 1945 (a favourite propaganda theme a few years ago) than I had anticipated. Instead, a quite new version was offered. Mr. David Irving's book, with its high casualty figures, was deplored by the local *Bürgermeister*, who insisted on a figure of as little as 35,000. Somewhat taken aback, we questioned this revisionist figure. A figure of over a hundred thousand, it was explained, would make the Dresden disaster comparable with (indeed more destructive than) Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And there were some people—he would leave us to guess where—who would then begin to argue that nuclear warfare might not be *so* bad after all....

THE NIGHTMARE logic of these discussions is not easy to convey. Nor is it easy to distinguish (a favourite Western game) the true *croyant* from the double-faced *apparatchik*. Take, for instance, the director of the Dresden museum, who described to us at great length how the Russians had "saved" Dresden's art treasures in the last days of the war and returned them to a grateful nation in 1955. What was the object of this particular exercise? It is no secret in East Germany that the Russians carried off Dresden's treasures as war booty—nor would most of us blame them in the circumstances. But I do not think that any member of our expedition had heard of this incident; the matter need not have been raised at all. Why, then, court disbelief by telling so unlikely a story? Similarly, at the Wall, our group was treated to an involved and indignant account of the trigger-happiness of the West Berlin police ("four *Volkspolizisten* have fallen defending the integrity of our republic"). Yet here was one subject at least on which we were all apprised of the facts: silence would have been better advised. When challenged by one of the group, our guide admitted that a number of young East Germans had been shot while escaping. But he added that more people were killed on the American-Mexican border every year than at the Berlin Wall.

Such arguments present something of a riddle. Surely the good propagandist must take account of his audience, must preach to the unconverted? True, sporadic attempts were made to do so. The advantages of wider trade—"we are always finding your chemical plant *most* satisfactory"—were a constant theme. The word had got round, evidently, that you should appeal to an Englishman's purse. Again, endemic British anti-Germanism was not unskilfully exploited. "We were allies in the struggle against Fascism, were we not?" Some of our party objected that the British had not quite seen the war in these ideological terms. They were told "Ah, but you were *objectively* anti-Fascist, no?" These same Nazis, it appeared, were now the people running the Federal Republic. "In our part of Germany, you must know, there can be no Nazis in the army or the civil service." I think the effectiveness of this argument lay in its sly suggestion that—given the English view that all Germans are (or were) Nazis—East Germans are not only not Nazis, but perhaps not really Germans at all. Anti-Germanism was thus cunningly projected—not without success—on to the *other* part of Germany. There are not only two German states—a rather satisfactory state of affairs, it was insinuated, in the eyes of the British—but a state of the Bad Germans,

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and a state of the Good Germans (who are not really Germans).

As THE DAYS WENT BY, the mental world of the functionaries, the ruling caste, began to seem ever more alienated, irrational, and fantastic. Nothing was more striking, for instance, than the discontinuity between their world and that of 50 to 70 per cent of East Germans who, while not uninfluenced by some aspects of their environment, customarily think in recognisable commonsense categories. It was a frequent experience—once people were satisfied you were not "one of *them*"—to be taken aside and privately told "what really goes on here." One moved, instantly, from a world where nothing is ever itself, where reality is always symbolic, to a greyer, more concrete world where facts and figures, incomes and prices, private hopes and pains do provide a common standard of reference. Thus, in Dresden, our party visited a block of new flats, ostensibly for workers. We were ushered into a comfortable, bourgeois *gute Stube* and invited to question the lady of the house (conveniently, an English-speaker) as to her income, rent, and other expenses. This lady, it soon transpired, worked for a municipal organisation and was not "typical." But next door, we were told, there lived a genuine worker, a bus conductress, whom we might care to visit. We duly shuffled off. At this point, a young man took one of us aside and whispered that, as a matter of fact, *all* visitors to Dresden were taken to see these two ladies. Suspicious, we questioned our second flat-dweller rather more closely. It turned out that she was no ordinary bus-conductress: "organised" since 1926, she had been a member of the Corporation for many years and was chairman of a municipal committee. It was, not least for our guides, an embarrassing incident.

And it is not, of course, only visitors from abroad who experience this dichotomy. The alienation of party ideology from common reality lends comic relief to what is (and has always been) one of the grimmer landscapes of Central Europe. A dozen examples spring to mind. Why, for instance, should every state trading shop have been plastered with exhortations: EAT MORE DUCK; DUCK IS DELICIOUS? People are not fools; indeed politically, unlike their West German brothers, East Germans are very sharp. They know, of course, that all advertising is state-controlled. If the régime wishes them to eat more duck, that can only mean one thing: the chicken supply has failed. Similarly, after a two-year campaign against the Twist as the acme of capitalist decadence, the régime suddenly came out—during the recent Youth Festival in East Berlin—with two Twist records of its own! Again, three years ago, hire purchase was still untouchable: now all washing machines, television sets (still about three times the price of a British set, though excellent in design) can be bought on the instalment plan. It is the same with cybernetics: until recently no Communist ideologist could conceal his contempt for this fruit of bourgeois pseudo-science. This time, we were given to understand, the future of Socialist planning in East Germany depended (as perhaps it does) on the application of these principles. To be sure, Communists, like the rest of us, make mistakes. But to set up a system that continually undermines its own credibility in this way is curiously quixotic. As long as the present state of affairs continues, it is hard to see how East Germany (or perhaps any East European state) can achieve lasting stability.

I HAVE TRIED to describe—without, I think, gross exaggeration—the *psychological* situation of a régime like the East German. There are, certainly, mitigating factors—like the growing need for economic rationality—which may work to modify the picture. But the world I have depicted is substantially that of the newspapers, radio, television, school and university education, as well as of general propaganda. It is the actual world-view, perhaps, of no more than 10 to 20 per cent of the population: but this 10 to 20 per cent forms the ruling caste, whose power is all-embracing and unchallengeable. Theoretically, no doubt, many of the follies I have described should be avoidable. But I think it is a mistake—if we are looking for possibilities of liberalisation—to underestimate the extent to which these follies are built into the system. Thus, for the trained functionary, it is not difficult to believe one day that the Beatles are a subversive influence, and the next that they represent a popular and progressive aspect of English culture. The *umdenken* required is a matter of routine. But for the man in the street such *umdenken* is not quite so easy. And there is something still more difficult: for the Communist to understand the difficulty the common man has with his *umdenken*, since the Communist does not experience this difficulty himself. I think that is why, in its propaganda,

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the régime is continually tripping itself up: the alienation of the functionaries from reality is simply too great. This does not mean that the functionaries are unaware of the resistance their propaganda encounters. They know of this resistance; but they are unable to account for it satisfactorily.

This bafflement and frustration was often painfully obvious in our conversation with them. Gradually, as time went by, we began to feel we were performing a rather different function from the one for which we had been groomed. Behind this desperate need to convince us of the correctness of a certain point of view we seemed to catch sight of a deeper, more existential motive. We began to wonder whether it was not *they* who doubted the existence of the German Democratic Republic, and we whose function it was to prove that it does, appearances to the contrary, exist.

WHAT, THEN, are the chances of "liberalisation"? Can East Germany be liberalised? Is a German Gomulka or a German Kadar conceivable? The majority of observers in West Germany—and probably elsewhere—doubt whether such an evolution is possible. But there is a minority faction in West Germany—with a strong and growing following among young people—which does look to such an evolution, and sees in it the only real hope for reunification.

The argument can be summarised as follows: East Germany has remained, thanks to its exposed position on the flank of the Communist world, a Stalinist fossil. With the building of the Wall, however, and the spread of liberalising influences in neighbouring Poland and Czechoslovakia (not to speak of the Soviet Union), the situation has changed. The régime now wields an authority that, before the Wall, it necessarily lacked: it has acquired self-confidence. The Cuban showdown in October 1962 led to the abandonment of an aggressive Communist policy over Berlin, and this shift of line was reflected in the new emphasis on internal industrial development (specialisation in chemicals within the framework of Comecon) at the Party Congress of January 1963. Since then, economic rationality has been the chief requirement, and this has found expression in the new economic policy of decentralisation and competition proclaimed this spring. But this new-found economic rationality—prices, for instance, are at last to be related to actual production costs—must lead to changes in the mental outlook of the ruling caste. The new young technocrats will find promotion; the old party dogmatists will be dropped. The end-result, it is argued, may well be a régime with which a rational dialogue will be possible.

There is no doubt that at least the first stages of this argument are well-grounded. The aggressive strategy of the period 1958–62 has been thrown overboard; the Wall has made long-term planning easier; the régime is much more confident of its authority.[1] "Liberalisation," admittedly, is a confused and confusing concept: Kafka is liberalisation, but so are "socialist legality" and "technological rationalisation." After the Wall went up, there were exaggerated hopes in some quarters that the régime might permit greater freedom of expression—just as there were exaggerated fears that the Party might take its revenge on those it had hitherto had to conciliate. In fact, neither of these extreme courses was pursued. The organised witch-hunts against people with West-orientated television aerials (an ugly feature of the first weeks after the Wall) were quickly dropped. The Party has avoided "provocations." It has not, on the other hand, liberalised its press or publishing policy to any appreciable extent. The newspapers remain the merest propaganda rags. An edition of Kafka is at last promised. But a quick check in the Leipzig bookshops showed that Sartre and most contemporary Western writers are still not available. An edition of Dostoevsky has appeared—without, of course, *The Possessed*. Graham Greene is represented —with *The Quiet American*. And the isolation from the East is not much less strict than the isolation from the West. None of the famous post-1956 Polish films has yet been officially shown in East Germany. If it is impossible to get a visa to visit Western Europe, you have to wait months to get a visa to Hungary or Czechoslovakia (except in organised groups). Even the newly-acquired school-Russian of the younger

[1] It was put to me by a West German journalist that the abject failure of the anti-West Berlin campaign must have damaged Communist morale, and perhaps given rise to pro-Chinese sentiments within the Party. But I do not believe this to be the case. The argument greatly underestimates the Communists' power of *umdenken*. Nor does it take account of the Communist view of the Wall. Its erection, in direct contravention of inter-allied agreements, is looked on as a highly successful coup, in which effrontery and sheer good nerves forced humiliation on the West.

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generation seems to be proving a mixed blessing. There was, presumably, never any question of an East German edition of *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. But the novel did, I'm told, appear briefly in *Russian* at the bookstalls—setting off a scramble which led to its being withdrawn altogether.

BUT ONE RESPECT in which the Wall has led to a genuine relaxation is that individual East Germans now speak far more freely to foreigners and to one another. There is no doubt that the Party now takes a far more tolerant view of what the individual citizen says in private (not in public) than anyone would have thought possible in 1961. Here Ulbricht seems to be living up to the maxim of his Prussian predecessor, Frederick the Great: "They can say what they like, so long as they do what I like." This is due, in part, to the remarkable solidarity that exists among the anti-Communist majority of East Germans. (Which makes East Germany, in terms of human relations, so much pleasanter a place to move about in than the socially far more "atomised" West Germany.) But it is due also to the common sense of the Party in deciding to turn a deaf ear, rather than try to enforce an impossible orthodoxy. In this sense, the Party's new self-confidence (evident in Ulbricht's behaviour on his recent Russian tour, when he is said to have contradicted Khrushchev in public) has made life a good deal more tolerable for the average East German. But is this "liberalisation"? If it is, one should add that it is liberalisation bought at the price of greater power and authority for the Party *apparat*—a somewhat ambiguous gain. It is confined, in any event, to the private sphere. There is no real sign—as the recent suspension of Professor Robert Havemann, after his "revisionist" lectures to East Berlin students, has shown—that the Party intends to relax its grip on all public means of communication and expression.

OTHER OBSERVERS pin their hopes for liberalisation in East Germany on "revisionism" within the Party. Again, the argument is familiar: "revisionism," in the sense of an evolution towards greater pragmatism, inner-party democracy, and non-dogmatic thinking, is the goal towards which all Communist societies are moving. Some are "backward"; others "advanced." China is where Russia was thirty years ago; so is Albania. Poland and Hungary, on the other hand, are almost within sight of the Promised Land: little now divides them from the more progressive societies of the West. All these societies can be placed on a time-scale, an evolutionary ladder, the goal of which is a liberal society such as we ourselves aspire to. This picture, in my view, was always something of an intellectual's pipe-dream (it was based, surely, on a misinterpretation of the role of the intellectuals in the Polish October). It is now widespread in liberal circles in Germany, as it has long been in this country, and provides the intellectual basis of many West Germans' hopes for liberalisation—and thus for disengagement, disarmament, and eventual reunification.

There are, I believe, two obvious objections to this concept. In the first place, it is said that East Germany, a Stalinist fossil in a post-Stalinist age, *must* succumb to "new pressures from within the bloc." But neither in "advanced" Poland or Hungary, nor for that matter in Yugoslavia, has the Party abandoned its overall claim to control the national life. If the Party has made concessions, it has been precisely in order to preserve its control—and in this it has had considerable success. Again, nothing is more striking than the ease with which, over the past ten years, each régime has contrived to deal with its internal problems in isolation. If recent developments in Rumania are anything to go by, this tendency may even be on the increase. If Poland is now considerably less liberal than it was five years ago, and Hungary considerably more so, that is largely due to their own internal exigencies. East Germany is responsive, in a quite special way, to events in the Soviet Union. But basically her policies are dictated by her particular situation. If the Russians should decree "liberalisation" (and the giving of permits to West Berliners to visit their relations seems to have been a *Russian* initiative), Ulbricht will do their bidding. But Ulbricht's main concern, like his masters', must be to maintain the authority of the Party in East Germany.

Nor do I know of any evidence that the intellectuals in East Germany have ever exerted significant influence on Party policy. That there is a strong revisionist strain among academics and writers is undeniable. Professor Robert Havemann's recent lectures—just published in West Germany under the title *Dialectics without Dogma*—are proof that this current exists. But there is a danger that intellectual "resisters" like Professor Havemann may be—from admirable motives—too eagerly acclaimed in the West. In

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1956, the cry was: "While there's a Harich, there's hope." (Though Wolfgang Harich's own wayward behaviour before his arrest is surely a monument to the follies of intellectuals in politics.) Until Ernst Bloch's departure, he too was cast in the West for the role of the One Just Man. When Hans Mayer left, just a year ago, the lights of intellectual resistance appeared finally to have gone out. Then a new candidate was built up in the person of Professor Havemann. All these men, it should be stressed, attracted and deserved the admiration of their colleagues in the West. Whether they ever wielded any political influence seems to me doubtful.

IT IS THE SAME, I believe, with the politicians. After Schirdewan and Wollweber were disgraced at the beginning of 1958 (politically, a far more serious affair), it was often argued that "if only Ulbricht's hard-line faction were removed Schirdewan might make a German Gomulka...." (The same is now being said in retrospect of Herrnstadt and Zaisser—exponents of the Beria line in 1953.) More recently, Willi Stoph, the Deputy Prime Minister, has been sold to the West (chiefly through the Soviet Embassy in Bonn) as a possible "liberal" alternative to Ulbricht. Yet it is an open secret that real power rests, not with governmental executives like Willi Stoph, but with the Party leadership, where the hard-line Erich Honecker is generally assumed to be Ulbricht's designated successor.

It is a mistake, perhaps, to see the matter in terms of personalities. It is true that Ulbricht and his group have mostly pursued hard-line policies in the past (except for the period 1953–56). But they have pursued these policies because, in the judgment of Moscow, the situation demanded them—just as the "New Course" after 1953 was a (muted) attempt to keep pace with the Thaw. For their own reasons, the Soviets might one day be prepared to throw Ulbricht to the wolves. But it is arguable that if the Russians could be induced (by Western and West German pressure) to make concessions in the field, say, of freedom of movement, Ulbricht might find it easier to carry out this policy than some more "liberal" figure in the wings. Significantly, I was told that in Saxony Ulbricht is now no longer referred to contemptuously as *der Spitzbart*, but as *unser Waldi*. Like Franco, he has become part of the landscape: he is not loved, but people are well aware that there are many as bad, and some certainly worse, in the Party hierarchy. They do not suffer from Western illusions that, "if only Ulbricht went," all would be well. Like Franco, Ulbricht too has a lot on his conscience; but, again like Franco, he is basically a cautious, opportunistic, pragmatic man. It is clear from Carola Stern's recently published biography (Cologne, 1964) that Ulbricht was not, as has often been said, directly responsible for the fate of Ernst Thälmann, Heinz Neumann, and other German Communist leaders. Like Franco, he has been built up by his enemies into a figure of monstrous and demonic proportions. Without wishing to defend either, it is reasonable to claim that neither has quite the qualities his enemies ascribe to him.

THERE IS A FURTHER argument for liberalisation, similar to the "revisionist" one, though in some ways contradictory of it. In an excellent series of articles in *Die Zeit*, Herr Theo Sommer and Countess Marion Dönhoff have grounded their hopes for change within East Germany on that younger generation of managers and technocrats who are impatient with Party dogma. Here, if anywhere, are the men with whom it may one day be possible to do business—to negotiate, perhaps, the reunification of Germany on strictly practical lines, bracketing out the ideological *furor* of the Cold War period. The argument relies, of course, not on an evolution within Marxist thought on revisionist lines, but rather on a gradual setting aside of Marxist-Leninist categories in favour of practical solutions. Its hidden assumption, I believe, is that since we find it difficult to believe what Communists believe, Communists cannot believe it themselves.

Now it is true that a generation of technocrats is in process of formation and that East Germany will be profoundly affected by this development. But I doubt if it will be affected in quite the way that is suggested. The positive side of this development is already evident. Promotion is already far more on grounds of talent than of political reliability. The non-party man who has the right qualifications is now able to get ahead and to attain a reasonable standard of living and of satisfaction in his work. A corollary of this is that the old discrimination in education between middle-class children and those of travellers and peasants has fallen away. One of the traveller's strongest impressions in East Germany is still, I think, of the second-

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rateness of so many of the leading figures in industry, government, and academic life. East Germany is like an army whose officers have run away and which has been taken over by its NCOs. (Or course German NCOs are very good, as two world wars have shown—which is one reason why East Germany has done, relatively, so well in the industrial field.) This all-pervading sense of second-rateness—with its accompanying inferiority complex—is very much less noticeable in, say, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, or Poland. There, the older strata—particularly the professional middle class—are still an active element in society. In the "GDR," it was precisely these people who formed so high a proportion of the three millions who fled between 1949–61. It must be remembered that East Germany is not "one-third of a nation," but a *selection* of one-third of a nation—and a demographically very unfavourable one. The Wall, and the new economic policy, will probably change this picture during the next ten years.

All this will certainly make East Germany a more tolerable place to live in. But, again, is this liberalisation? After all, Germany is the classical land of the "non-political expert"—from Albert Speer to Wernher von Braun. In no other country is the temptation so great to shrug off political responsibility, and to find solace in the sphere of pure research or applied expertise. That the régime feels it can afford to promote competent men over the heads of the faithful is, once again, proof of its self-confidence. But it does not seem likely that Marxist-Leninist ideology—the theoretical justification for Party rule—is likely to wither away as a result. This has not happened in the Soviet Union, where a comparable process has been going on for very much longer. Once more, we are back at the notion that the ruling caste does not believe what it purports to believe. But a reading of Carola Stern's biography of Ulbricht—and Ulbricht is customarily (though perhaps inaccurately) called an opportunist—does not support this view. The ruling group in West Germany is tight-knit, and believes utterly in the rightness of what it is doing. It is too simple to argue that Marxism-Leninism is a mere fig-leaf for the will to power. Power and ideology are inseparably—indeed, dialectically—related in the thinking of men like Ulbricht. The rise of the technocrats will not, I think, affect this basic fact. Its long-term effect, on the contrary, will be to strengthen the régime.

THIS IS, I am afraid, a gloomy prognosis. Mr. R. V. Burks in his article on "The Thaw" in last month's ENCOUNTER, is no doubt right when he says that what may be possible in other Eastern European countries (though I find him here a trifle optimistic) is not possible in East Germany. Yet when Mr. Burks speaks, as do many commentators, of a possible "collapse" of East Germany under the strain of liberalisation, I think he may be underestimating the degree of stability the régime has now achieved. Indeed, one cannot help thinking—without presuming to do Herr Ulbricht's job for him—that there are some concessions which the régime could now make without endangering its own position. There are already indications—the recent release of Heinz Brandt and Georg Dertinger—that an attempt is being made to impress Western opinion more favourably. There are rumours of a general amnesty on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the republic. The easing of restrictions on West Berliners wishing to visit their relatives would also be a popular, and politically inexpensive, move.

Nevertheless, the régime certainly intends to trade these humanitarian concessions for some progress towards political recognition. And at this point we are plunged into the controversy at present raging in West Germany as to what Bonn's relations with the Eastern world ought to be. That is beyond the scope of this report. But it is worth pointing out that the pragmatic approach of Mayor Willy Brandt—"You can't agree with Communists about the meaning of democracy, but you can agree about how many tons of lignite you'll barter for how many tons of Ruhr steel"—is being seriously compromised by the hard-line opposition to Schroeder's and Brandt's policies by Franz Josef Strauss, Baron Guttenberg, and Dr. Adenauer. Herr Mende, on the other hand, recently declared in a *Spiegel* interview that West Germany would be prepared to modify some of its attitudes if concessions for the East German population could be achieved. For instance, to take up Herr Ulbricht's offer of an exchange of newspapers (even if it was not seriously meant, it ought to have been tested), it may be necessary to modify the present legal restrictions on the publication of Communist literature in West Germany. Again, the travel restrictions imposed by the Allied Travel Board in Berlin should—according to Mende—be relaxed as far as possible. (Perhaps Allied concessions on this matter could

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be traded against further "perforation" of the Wall.) But, as Mende himself points out, the scope for negotiations is not great. West Germany can no longer impose her will by means of economic sanctions. Only eight per cent of East German trade is done with the Federal Republic; and East Germany would find no difficulty in obtaining (though on less advantageous terms) goods and raw materials from other countries should Bonn cancel—as happened once before in 1960—the present interzonal trade agreements.

Reciprocal concessions are one thing; genuine co-operation, leading to reunification or confederation, quite another. Up to a point, East Germany will travel with Prague, Warsaw, and Budapest in the next few years—whether or not Ulbricht stays in power. But the room for manœuvre is necessarily more confined in East Germany's case. And the sticking-point, of course, is embarrassingly plain: how can East Germany hope to profit from that underlying nationalism on which Kadar, Gomulka, and Gheorgiu-Dej can call? There is, paradoxically a sense in which the German problem would be more amenable if Ulbricht were more popular and East Germany stronger. Then, conceivably, there might be free elections, and negotiations between equals. But as long as West Germany exerts the kind of magnetism that she does (and cannot help doing), by virtue of her vastly greater strength, size, wealth, and prestige, there is really no way of reconciling the people of East Germany to their lot.

What we are faced with is a frozen Civil War, and it is not clear that a bettering of the cold-war climate in general will alter the situation. The tragedy of divided Germany is that the Russians can neither give up East Germany nor do anything to make its régime acceptable. Periodic euphoria about regional disarmament or disengagement should not blind us to the essential point: it is political, not military, considerations that prevent Moscow from yielding her most forward European bastion. As long as there is no chance of retaining a Communist power-base within a reunited, democratic Germany, Moscow is bound to prefer the present state of affairs, unsatisfactory as it is. There are, as I have suggested, ways in which the régime could make life more tolerable for its citizens; and we in the West should do what we can to further these efforts. But I doubt if there is anything the West can do, even if it wanted to, to make the régime acceptable to those who have to live under it. (Even recognition would not remove the basic trouble, which is that East Germans do not want to be East Germans at all, but simply Germans.) As Brecht despairingly wrote in the summer of 1953—and how little the situation has changed in the meantime!—when he read a government proclamation that the workers who had initiated the rising of June 17th had "forfeited the confidence of the régime":

would it not be better after all
if this government were to dismiss its people
and elect another?

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Peter Porter

How to Get a Girl Friend

1

Be concealed among the lower bushes
Under a mixture of shadows
Cast by the teasing sun,
Have the parts of a God straining to move,
Know the ways nymphs take through the woods,
Be even more knowing,
Have read the scholiasts and their heirs
The New Scholars,
Be finally knowing,
Have trained your nose away from familiar scents
To this difficult virgin undertaking.
Here she comes at the proper pubescence,
Step out and say: I am your fate.
Then the rest is parting of hairs,
Tuning her cries to the old scale,
Washing the country face in its own tears
And if found out a minor constellation
Or perhaps two old parents on a pension till death.

2

Be tubercular in a city
Where there have been two pogroms
Since the last census: be baptised
By old and doting parents, have been patted
On the head by the senile Emperor
On his morning walk across the park,
Have just spent too much on a minor example
Of rococo the same evening your avant-garde
Story is being read to the Literary Society,
Be snug in the knowledge
Of the great diaries timed to explode
In at least three capitals when your lungs
Give out: then, at last, approach
That thin girl with the Missal
In the open-air café where the Hungarian Band plays,
Show her the entries for June 5th and August 9th
And while the lovely tubercule tunnels
Get beyond the Mimi stage, arrive at
The calm of many quarrels till
Surrounded by friends your unnecessary affair
Achieves its apotheosis and the Gods
Hang Heaven black with emblems for you.

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When your girl dies they'll turn your summerhouse
Into a tram shelter where men write
I want it tonight and nylon knickers give off sparks
And birds find nothing new whoever shelters there.

3

Be man enough to end those pointless week-ends,
Bitching in her tiny kitchen, talking Zen,
Sneaking down the dark steps mined with bottles—
Take a new room across town, don't open her letters.

Put oriental wisdom and cryptic sense
Under your foot—dress well, get drunk once a week,
Build up debts: somebody has to take
Responsibility of all these girls.

Be exposed to mirrors and start to burn.
Then to work. That girl you're looking at
Who seemed to be with that appalling type
Is looking back: bring your leg across.

She's talking about the different tastes
Of oysters: she can't mean it. Now
Puff up those small feathers, they may dazzle.
You can grow wings flying to the sun.

4

Be coaxed from parsing love's fine language,
Be the right man in the right place for once.
Suck the straw she passes you,
Lick the grass stain off her skinny knees—
The air of afternoon is hairy,
The ground thick in dismembered bees.
Soon enough, thundering in the distance,
She turns her Breughel landscape round
To trap the late sugar of the sun.
Say to her Darling, kiss my hot ears,
Touch my eyes with your tongue,
Cure me of the plainness in my mind:
You are the great Atlas of my childhood,
All your names are furry caterpillars
Crawling to me across the tall Carpathians.
You have come so far to see me
I will sleep when you have gone. The outer
Suburbs are selling lime drinks though
The sun is now low down, the clang
Of iron gates carries like glockenspiels
Across the valley, the old quarry
Is filled with light, tadpole fishers
Are ready to hear their mothers' shouts.
It can never have been so beautiful
Or worth so many lies: I am at home here
In my nest of doubts. Open your eyes love,
The sun adorns us with its happenings.

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THEATRE

Amazing Reductions

By John Gross

ALL GOOD DRAMA involves an element of surprise, and to that extent the National Theatre did well in choosing to open their summer season at Colchester with Mr. Peter Shaffer's new play about the conquest of Peru. Few things in Mr. Shaffer's earlier work would have led one to discern in him the future historian of Pizarro and Atahuallpa; and it was hardly less disconcerting, given that the attempt was being made, to discover that *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* is altogether less complex and inventive than the domestic dramas with which the author made his name. For much of its length it is a straightforward chronicle play, framed by the most rudimentary of narrative devices and helped along with extracts from W. H. Prescott. Only the central characters, the God-King and the Conquistador, are intended to be anything more than predictable puppets, and the confrontations between these two are largely taken up with exchanging the kind of unripe reflections about life which it would be difficult to palm off as serious thought outside a theatre.

Still, there is room for the strong simplicity of a two-finger exercise, provided the tunes are good enough; and the fall of the Incas is a theme which calls less for subtlety than for magnificence, a theme which might have attracted the great monomaniac dramatists like Marlowe and Claudel. Pizarro himself, for instance—a man from nowhere, embittered by his bastardy, ruthless, restless, indifferent to the gods but unable to reconcile himself to the idea of death: here is an over-reacher whom it is easy to imagine blazing away beside Tamburlaine. But we listened in vain for Mr. Shaffer's mighty line. Where we had hoped for high astounding terms, we were fobbed off with amazing reductions, rhetoric at bargain rates. It was clitch upon clitch, as Ernest Bevin used to say: a level waste of decent drabness, with nothing but an occasional infelicity to light up the prevailing lacklustre idiom. It is no doubt the fault of the English language, and not of Mr. Shaffer, if "Son of the Sun" is not a compelling phrase; but there is no reason why Atahuallpa should be made to seem that much less godlike by being given lines like "Not a leaf stirs in my kingdom without my leave." Immortal longings and imperial themes are buried in this play; but the greater the issue, the more potent the language needed to bring it to life.

Meanwhile the production falls back on that "good theatre" which is usually the sign of a weak play. The actors stomp and strut and do their best; the extras have been well drilled by a choreographer, and mime their way across the Andes as devoutly as if they were stealing coke. The masks and costumes are spectacular, and the technical tricks, particularly the sunburst which first reveals Atahuallpa, have been justly admired. But pageantry has lost the power which it once had of diverting the eye for more than a minute or two at a time; the world has grown old, and we have seen vaster epics on wider screens. Alas, for the fur and feathers; alas, for the stereophonic birdsong; alas and alas, for Mr. Marc Wilkinson's admirable ying-tong music, which was eerily effective. The gilding was handsome, and the externals were lavish; but when the casket was opened, it contained nothing but lead.

SOME RASH FOOLS may conclude that the *débâcle* at Chichester constitutes a powerful argument for bringing back poetry to the theatre. Can they have forgotten so soon that the post-war attempt to revive poetic drama was signposted *This Way to the Tomb*, that even the great Eliot (to say nothing of the lesser Fry) found himself at a dead end? How many more times do they have to be told that what the theatre really needed ten years ago was not overheated lyricism or Greek choruses but the poetry of everyday life, and that the want has now been supplied—by the Pinters, not by the poets? If they still nurse any unfriendly doubts, let them

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hasten to the revival of *The Birthday Party* at the Aldwych. From the opening moments at the breakfast table, Mr. Pinter establishes himself as perhaps the gratest master of tongue-in-cheek banalities since the young Noël Coward. Admittedly he lacks Coward's artistic self-discipline and sureness of touch, but to make up for this he is more of a democrat, and refuses to deny to Sidcup and Lower Edmonton the automatic chuckles which were once reserved for the mere mention of Norfolk or Haywards Heath. Few contemporary playwrights are as alive as Mr. Pinter to the comic possibilities of cornflakes; and who would have thought that the old teapot had so much Absurdity in it?

It is tempting to write down Mr. Pinter as essentially a regionalist, a connoisseur of North London speech-patterns. "Get off my breasts, Webber" may not be as witty a line as was once supposed, but it does have a certain distinctive resonance in comparison with the utterances of Pizarro. The Aldwych programme goes further than this, however, quoting a couple of paragraphs from *The Trial*: "a context to *The Birthday Party* is suggested, nothing more...." In the context of Kafka *The Birthday Party* looks just what it is—a flimsy pastiche; and the emissaries who turn up in order to abduct Stanley Webber appear to come less from outer or inner darkness than from some tired old commercial traveller's joke about an Irishman and a Jew. But Stanley himself, slouching round the house like the quintessential yob, is rather an interesting character, drawn with considerable understanding—or so I felt, though I may have been misled by an exceptionally good performance from Bryan Pringle. The more conviction Stanley carries, however, the more offensive *The Birthday Party* becomes. A human being is wantonly tormented, reduced to speechless idiocy, hustled out to an unknown fate—and we aren't even prompted to ask why. There is still a distinction to be made between the Theatre of Cruelty and the Theatre of Sadism.

IT IS POSSIBLE to take a different view of *The Birthday Party*. In an interview in the current number of *Encore* David Rudkin calls it "a thunderclap," and pays tribute to Pinter's influence on his own work. This means that, with the Royal Shakespeare Company also presenting *Afore Night Come* and *endgame*, three theatrical generations are now on display at the Aldwych: Beckett begat Pinter, and Pinter begat Rudkin. It also suggests that Mr. Rudkin is the proselyte of a parasite, the shadow of a shade. But influences do not necessarily work themselves out in descending order of quality, and Mr. Rudkin has written a better play than his master's. The fate of the Irish tramp Roche, murdered and beheaded by fruit-pickers in a Worcestershire orchard, is as gruesome as Stanley Webber's, and very nearly as improbable; but it is not gratuitous in the same way. Roche is a foredoomed scapegoat, Webber the victim of whimsical Grand Guignol. Two similar pieces of business point the contrast. When Webber's glasses are snatched from him, and he gropes blindly round the stage, we recoil from an exhibition of arbitrary bear-baiting; when the same thing happens to Roche, we feel all the more forcibly how much his mere presence has been unnerving the community which he has tried to join, and how relentlessly they are beginning to turn on him.

In fact most of the other members of the group are also misfits and potential butts, but only Roche, with his foul smell and his rambling fantasies, is so alien to the tribe that they cast him out utterly. Even the half-witted Johnny Hobnails manages to find a place for himself; but Roche, although he is quite harmless, inspires steadily deepening horror—"Everywhere he do tread, the earth do bloody die." At the beginning of the play the men's philosophy of life, voiced by the foreman, is more humdrum: "Must have someone to take the mickey out on." How does Mr. Rudkin move from this point towards the savagery at the close? In the *Encore* interview, he warns against an unduly "anthropological or Frazer" approach: "I possess a copy of *The Golden Bough*, but I don't think I've ever read it." (A remarkable lapse of memory, if he *has* read it.) Still, Roche's death is staged as a ritual murder, a fearful ceremony in which the killers know their parts by instinct. It says much for Mr. Rudkin's command of dialogue (and dialect) that the audience takes all this with a collective straight face, and never a thought of *Cold Comfort Farm*. The solid naturalistic element outweighs the lumpish symbolism (and afore Wilson Knight come, it had better be said that the piece fairly swarms with references to blood, fertility, the Crucifixion). But the impassive reporting which saves the play from collapsing into an Aldwych farce also muffles much of its impact: Mr. Rudkin remains resolutely neutral and non-committed. At the end the body is wrapped up and buried, the fruit-picking business goes on as usual, and it is as if Roche had never existed.

NO TRAMP ever got such a raw deal from Samuel Beckett. He alone of the Aldwych trio suggests that life can still be tragic, and death something more than waste-disposal. The value is defined by the anguish. "Can there be misery loftier than mine?" asks Hamm at the beginning of *endgame*; and however heavy

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the irony or the blarney, we are grateful to him for not pitching his claims too low. Not that Beckett ought to be encouraged to overindulge in self-pity; we should all do our best to cheer him up, particularly by reminding him how funny he is. His actors can be of great assistance here, above all by ignoring any requests which he may make for productions which pile on the agony. The cast at the Aldwych have the right idea, although Donald McWhinnie's direction inclines towards solemnity. But Patrick Magee roaring away like a demented raconteur, and Jack MacGowran peering into the parental dustbin: these are comic performances of a high order.

Underneath the comedy lies despair, and underneath the despair lies deep sentimentality, a determined infantilism which puts one in mind of *Peter Pan*. In both plays there is a frantic effort to stop the clock, a hopeless confusion between the roles of parent and child and domestic pet. Barrie, less restrained than Beckett, actually thrusts Mr. Darling into a kennel; there is nothing quite as stark as that in *endgame*, although Beckett goes as far as he decently can by keeping Nagg in a dustbin and feeding him a Spratt's dog-biscuit. On the other hand, who else but Beckett could compress so much of childhood's abject dependence and towering resentment into a four-word exchange: Hamm bawling out his "accursed progenitor" while his pappy (or puppy) begs for "me pap"? Everywhere in *endgame* we are in full retreat towards the nursery, the world of toys, sugarplums, breast-feeding, bed-wetting, and whimpering in the dark.

Yet Beckett wouldn't be an artist if he were no more than an infantilist, if his impulse towards dissolution wasn't held in check by an equally strong impulse towards order (and he talks of order and beauty as though they were interchangeable). Sometimes one impulse or the other gets the upper hand, and then his work sinks into either gibberish or pedantry: there is no denying that even in a piece as short as *endgame* there is a good deal of dross, patches of irredeemable tedium. We shuffle our feet, look at our watches, wonder which brand of talcum-powder is doing duty for Clov's insecticide. But only for a minute or two; Beckett's fantasy recaptures us, and we submit once again to the cosmic pantomime of master-and-servant, body-and-soul, father-and-son.

All these relationships are run together in *endgame*, but it would be misreading Beckett to treat the play as an allegory and search for a one-way interpretation, a master key. As Kenneth Tynan remarked of an earlier production, "Themes, madam? Nay, it *is*, I know not themes." *endgame* is a myth, an opal which takes on new colours as it revolves in our minds; and, in the best Joycean fashion, it constantly recalls other men's myths as well. The Shakespearean echoes are particularly strong. Hamm and Clov are explicitly compared with Prospero and Caliban at several points; while Nagg, armed in the complete steel of a dustbin, might well say to Hamm, "I am thy father's spirit." But Hamm also brings to mind Ham, whose descendants were cursed (Gen. ix 22f.) after he had seen his father's nakedness. What is the setting of *endgame* if not a great sinister ark, with Clov looking through his telescope at a tideless sea where there are no more navigators? Which would make Hamm, father and son in one, Noah as well Ham—and a Noah oppressed with guilt at the thought of "all those I might have helped . . . saved!" The analogies soon break down, whichever way we push them; but Beckett's work is too concentrated and cryptic for us ever to know for sure whether they were really there in the first place, or whether we can take the credit for having dreamed them up.

What does indubitably lie at the heart of *endgame* is an image of warring brothers, all-too-inseparable companions, men chained to each other, however reluctantly, by mutual need. Beckett has inherited Joyce's obsession with dualisms, doubles, the co-existence of eternal opposites; Hamm and Clov—and here we dangle our last analogue—might come from the tale told of Shem and Shaun in *Finnegans Wake*. But Beckett has repaid the debt and made the theme his own. The same can hardly be said for Mr. Shaffer. There is a scene in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* where Pizarro and Atahuallpa are tied to the opposite ends of a length of rope: the two antagonists stand or fall together. Mr. Shaffer's view of the world is preferable to Beckett's, but it must be admitted that the invisible chains in *endgame* are much stronger than the Inca's bonds. They have been forged in the imagination, and the metaphor is mightier than the prop. Beckett is a poet: we disagree with him, and accept him. The road to Chichester, on the other hand, is paved with good intentions: but when we get there, words fail us.

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Anne Sexton

Walking in Paris

I come back to your youth, my Nana,
as if I might clean off
the mad woman you became,
withered and constipated,
howling into your own earphone.
I come, in middle age,
to find you at twenty in high hair and long Victorian skirts
trudging *shanks mare* fifteen miles a day
because you could not afford a carriage.
I have walked sixteen miles today.
I have kept up.

I read your Paris letters of 1890.
Each night I take them to my thin bed
and learn them as an actress learns her lines.
"Dear Homefolks" you wrote,
not knowing I would be your last home,
not knowing I'd peel your life back to its start.
What is so real as walking your streets!
I too have the sore toe you tend with cotton.
In Paris 1890 was yesterday
and 1940 never happened—
the soiled uniform of the Nazi
has been unravelled and reknit and resold.
To be occupied or conquered is nothing—
to remain is all!

Having come this far
I will go farther.
You are my history (that stealer of children)
and I have entered you.
I have deserted my husband and my children,
the Negro issue, the late news and the hot baths.
My room in Paris, no more than a cell,
is crammed with 58 lbs of books.
They are all that is American and forgotten.
I read your letters instead,
putting your words into my life.

Come, old woman,
we will be sisters!
We will price the menus in the small cafés, count francs,
observe the tower where Marie Antoinette awaited her beheading,
kneel by the rose window of Notre Dame,
and let cloudy weather bear us home early
to huddle by the weak stove in Madame's kitchen.
I will set out tomorrow in stout shoes
to buy a fur muff for our blue fingers.
I take your arm boldly,
each day a new excursion.
Come, my sister,
we are two virgins,
our lives once more perfected
and unused.

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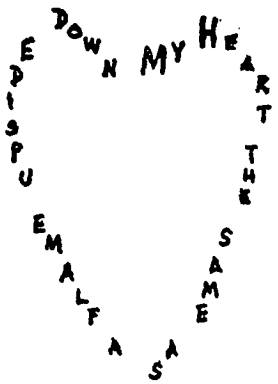
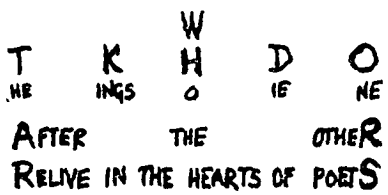
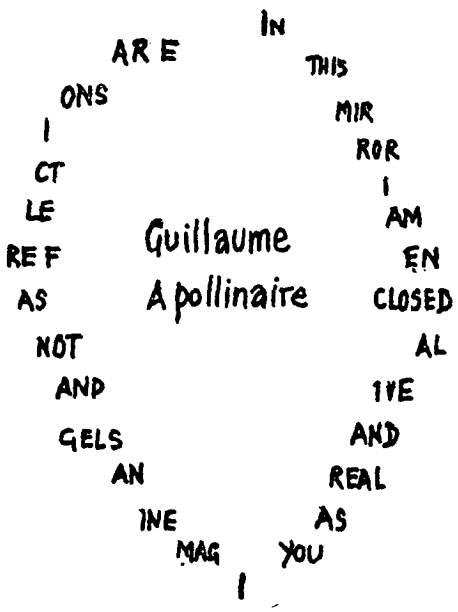
Oliver Bernard

4 Calligrammes and 2 Poems after Apollinaire

Heart, Crown and Mirror







Prayer

When I was a little child
My mother always dressed me in blue and white
O Holy Virgin
Do you love me still
For my part I
Know I shall love you
Until I die
And yet it's finished all the same
I don't believe in heaven or in hell
I don't believe any more I don't believe
The sailor who was rescued
For never having forgotten to say
A Hail Mary every day
Looked like me he looked like me

Hotel

My room's shaped like a cage the sun
Puts his arm right through the window
But I who wish to smoke and dream
Use it to light my cigarette
I don't want to work I want to smoke

Letter to Andre Billy: April 9, 1915

Gunner/Driver One (front-line)
Here I am and send you greetings
No no you're not seeing things
My Sector's number fifty-nine

I hear the whistle of
The the bird
beautiful bird of prey

I see far away
the cathedral

O D
H E
M A
Y A R
N D R E
B I L L Y

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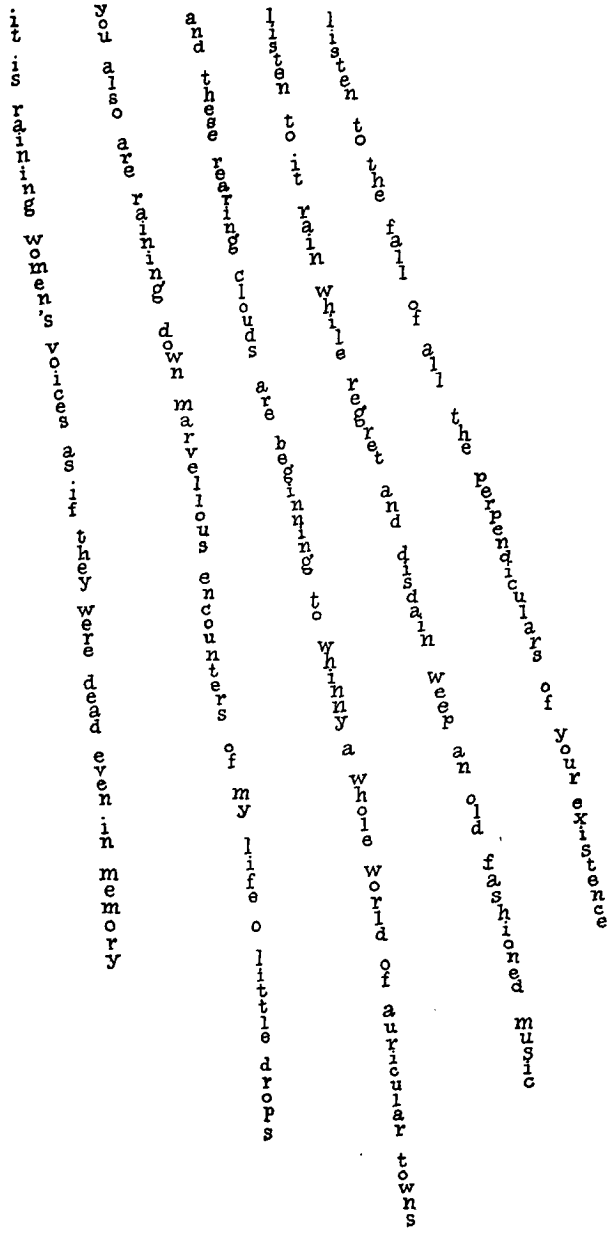
It's Raining


listen to the fall of all the perpendiculars of your existence
listen to it rain while regret and disdain weep an old fashioned music
and these rearing clouds are beginning to whinny a whole world of auricular towns
you also are raining down marvellous encounters of my life o little drops
it is raining women's voices as if they were dead even in memory

HERE
IS THE C
OFFIN IN
WHICH H
E REST
ED RO
TTING
AND P
ALE

LONG LIVE FRANCE!
HE SLEEPS IN HIS LI
TTLE SOLDIER'S BED
MY RESUSCITATED
P O
E T

Here is the coffin . . .
Long live France!

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NOTES & TOPICS

A Moveable Myth

SITTING at a table outside the Closerie des Lilas café one afternoon in 1925, Ernest Hemingway was enjoying his squatter's rights. He liked it there because it was patronised by the real people—the neighbourhood French—and not by literary types. Then suddenly Ford Madox Ford appeared and, uninvited and unwelcome, sat down with Hemingway, looking like an "ambulatory, well-clothed, up-ended hogshead."

This is the beginning of one of the scenes in *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway's recollections of his Paris days. What follows is one of the most malicious satirical sketches any writer has ever given of another, and Ford is made to appear as a seedy author, absent-minded gasbag, pretender to the rank of gentleman, and aimless liar. Obviously Ford had given a real relish to Hemingway's enjoyment of rancour. Ford—though this is never said—was exactly the kind of person Hemingway frequently grew to hate. He was Hemingway's friend, editorial collaborator, sponsor, and unfailing publicist throughout the years.

But it would be wrong to dismiss that chapter as a mere fit of irritable ingratitude. As I read this section and later as I went back to look at Ford's memories of those days in *It Was the Nightingale*, it struck me that Hemingway may well have been building up an elaborate parody—a sort of inside joke of the kind Haydn played when he stole a theme from another composer for the "Thou Shalt Not Steal" portion of his *Ten Commandments*. "Ford Madox Ford and the Devil's Disciple" has an air of deadpan plausibility about it while, insofar as I can make out, almost none of it is fact. At the same time, it has a certain truth of parody.

When I used to know Ford, towards the end of his life, he talked considerably about Hemingway and always in terms of high praise. But apparently the two of them had disagreed with some bitterness over an incident at *the transatlantic review*, which they were editing together in 1924. In that year, Ford went to America and Hemingway wrote and published his remarkable obituary of Joseph Conrad in which he noted that "If I knew that by grinding Mr. T. S. Eliot into a fine dry powder and sprinkling that powder over Mr. Conrad's grave Mr. Conrad would shortly appear, looking very annoyed at the forced return and commence writing I would leave for London early tomorrow with a sausage grinder."

Mr. Eliot was unamused by the notion of being pulverised in order to accommodate Joseph Conrad and he wrote Ford with some indignation. In his November issue, Ford apologised for the "blood-thirstyness" of his assistant editor and deplored the theory of a sausage-grinder resurrection. Hemingway disliked Ford thereafter, left the *review*, and (according to Burton Rascoe) even objected violently to Ford's wishing to buy Hadley Hemingway a drink on one occasion.

So there is Ford Madox Ford, a wheezing, disagreeable, quite-unexplained presence at Hemingway's table on that hypothetical afternoon in the *temps perdu* of *A Moveable Feast*. One of Ford's cherished theories about human behaviour (and one that often appears in his fiction) was the idea that nobody ever *really* pays any attention to what another is saying in conversation. One is always playing a conversational *God Save the King* while his friend opposite answers with *Pop Goes the Weasel*. He felt that talk was largely a manner of giving voice to one's ego and that the final result was usually "Pop Goes the King, God Save the Weasel." Here Hemingway takes over this theory and applies it to Ford's conversation with great sarcasm. Ford wants to invite Hemingway to an entertainment he is giving "in that amusing Bal Musette near the Place Contrescarpe." Hemingway insists that he used to live in the same building. Ford continues to give elaborate directions for finding it. Hemingway says that he always used to drink a glass of white wine at the zinc bar of that very Bal before setting out for the airfield to fly somewhere. "I never cared for flying" Ford says and offers to draw Hemingway a map to direct him there.

From this, Hemingway moves on to scorch Ford in another place—his manners as a gentleman. Hilaire Belloc, according to Ford, is at the moment passing by on the sidewalk. Though Belloc is apparently looking in the other direction, Ford insists that he has cut him. "*Did* I cut him!" Ford exclaims. But Hemingway is full of regret: "I felt badly that Ford had been rude to him." Then the discussion moves on to something else but finally, at the end of the chapter, when Ford has left, Hemingway sees the same passer-by and remarks to the waiter that over there is Hilaire Belloc whom, not long ago, Ford was pleased to cut dead. Not at all, says the waiter, that man is Aleister Crowley, the diabolist.

Ford must have been very angry with this man whom he could not recognise at sight. It is curious because other evidence from Ford's

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life seems to suggest that he not only knew Belloc quite well but that he admired him and sought him out. In *Return to Yesterday*, for instance, Ford describes in some detail a long dinner- and drinking-evening he spent with Belloc and some other writers in London. Ford also published Belloc in *The English Review*. Then later, in 1923, Ford says that he discovered that he and Belloc were staying at the same hotel in St. Agrève. Ford searched hard for Belloc (who was there to write a report on the local agricultural fair), but failed to find him. Although there had been some irritation on Belloc's part when Ford had questioned his scholarship in the course of a book review, Ford nevertheless remained friendly enough to speak of "the admirable writing of that genius" in *It Was the Nightingale*. It seems unlikely that Ford would describe Belloc as a cad and delight in snubbing him. But here Hemingway is deepening his trap.

The incident, Hemingway relates, leads on to a discussion of cads and bounders. Is Ezra a gentleman? No, Ford answers, "He's an American." Was Henry James a gentleman? "Very nearly." Ford replies. Are you a gentleman? Naturally, Ford says. "I have held his Majesty's commission." Finally, Hemingway wants to know, "Am I a gentleman?" "Absolutely not," says Ford, and then relents a little. "You might be considered a gentleman in Italy."

Now Ford, as the mood happened to strike him, could be almost anything he wished. He could be an old Etonian (which he was not), a French poet (he loved Provence and lived there off and on during his life), a kind of scholarly German critic (his original name was Hueffer and his father had emigrated from Germany), or even an accomplished chef. But Ford's deepest instincts were bohemian and he rather detested the idea of being classified as a gentleman. In *It Was the Nightingale*, he says, "By the time I had arrived at St. Jean Cap Ferrat I had arrived at the stage of finding the gentleman an insupportable phenomenon." In another place, he relates an anecdote about a Tory election agent who wanted to write down Ford's occupation as "gentleman" after Ford had explained that he wrote books for a living. Ford indignantly said that he was not a gentleman at all; he was a poet. "More than anything I resented being forced to be a Gentleman. An artist cannot be a Gentleman, for, if he is a Gentleman he is no artist." One of Ford's most brilliantly incisive portraits in fiction is that of Edward Ashburnham, the perfect gentleman of *The Good Soldier*, whose eyes revealed him as "perfectly honest, perfectly straightforward, perfectly, perfectly stupid."

Oddly enough, on the other hand, Ford regarded Hemingway both as a brilliant young writer and as a gentlemanly type. In those days he used to describe Hemingway (both in conversation to Harold Loeb and in print) as having "rather the aspect of an Eton-Oxford husky-ish young captain from an English midland regiment." And as for Henry James, Ford's awe was enormous: "he was obviously of the *grand monde* and of the daily habit of rubbing, on equal terms, shoulders with the great."

So, with the reappearance of the supposed Hilaire Belloc, that small afternoon scene in the Closerie des Lilas comes to an end. Ford has fallen to the bottom of Hemingway's parody-trap, but have we, the readers, dropped into it too?

THE DESIGN OF THE TRAP is something on the order of iconotropy, which Robert Graves defines as a procedure in which "the icons are not defaced or altered but are merely interpreted in a sense hostile to the original cult." To understand the dimension of Hemingway's iconotropic practical joke, one has to remember Ford's inveterate contempt for the mere facts of the matter. Sober and literal people took him to be an irresponsible liar. Others, more understanding, realised that he never told a story twice in the same way simply because it bored him to do that—he preferred to be sketching out a new piece of fiction rather than repeating an old one. It was thus that almost any fact about Ford's experiences became clouded by his various fanciful versions until it began to seem that he had, literally, invented himself.

My favourite example of Ford's hyperbole is a story he told to Edgar Jepson about the circumstances of his being gassed in the first World War. Now Ford suffered considerable lung damage from a German gas attack in the summer of 1917—there is convincing evidence that this is true. True, but to Ford's mind a fairly banal event without any fictional interest. It deserved, he must have thought, a somewhat more fascinating kind of development. And, in the course of time and telling, it did receive such a satisfying growth that Hemingway, Richard Aldington, and probably a good many others came to decide that Ford had never been in combat at all.

Ford told Jepson that he was packing up to go on leave one day when the alarm for a gas attack was sounded. There was enough time to get into dugouts safely and put on gas masks and, before long, the air was clear again. Ford emerged, closed up his portmanteau, and set off through a communications trench to the rear. He got transport to the coast, crossed the channel, boarded a London train, took a taxi

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to his hotel, registered and went to his room. With a great sense of relief at being out of the trenches and out of danger for the time being, he opened up his portmanteau—which immediately filled the room with poison gas.

The ironic thing about Hemingway's sketch is that Ford, treacherous as he was to the rule of fact, was consistently loyal to his beliefs. He believed that good writing was very nearly man's greatest accomplishment. He would not have called a writer he admired a cad; he would not have been supercilious about James or Donne or Pound or Ernest Hemingway. Ford thought of them all as being something more than "gentlemen" rather than less.

Hemingway saw Ford as a kind of Baron Münchausen, I should guess, and decided that the greatest kind of comic revenge would be to invent an outrageous lie about him. The theory is a clever one. The only trouble was that Hemingway lacked the X-ray vision of a true parodist. He could not understand that Ford never lied in order to hurt or damage another person; he fabricated in order to make the world a more charming or more fantastic place. Improbable gas escaping from an improbable portmanteau in a London hotel room perhaps, but never one admirable writer cruelly and deliberately lying about another.

Robie Macauley

Crossman's Illusion

MR. RICHARD CROSSMAN'S premise ["Scientists in Whitehall, ENCOUNTER, July]—that we live at a time when a "constantly accelerating rate of technological change" is creating "explosive" social problems—is close to what many people believe; yet it is surprisingly difficult to substantiate. And the conclusion to which Mr. Crossman proceeds—that government must therefore employ more scientists—is a *non-sequitur*.

No one can deny that a good deal of technological change has been taking place since World War II; atomic energy, electronic computers, and jet engines have been filling man's capacity to wonder. But Mr. Crossman has said something stronger—that technological change is now taking place faster than ever before. To speak, as he does, of an "accelerating rate of technological change" implies that he, or someone, knows how to measure technological change. He uses the expression "technological change" as lightly as though it were like "change in height." Anyone could mark off a child's height with a tape measure, and noting that on three successive birthdays the height was 40 inches, 44 inches, and 50 inches, could compute that the annual rate of change was 10 per cent during the first year and 12 per cent during the second; from which he would comfortably deduce "an increasing rate of change in the child's height." The observer's calm certitude would rest in part on knowing that height is measurable in inches. The problem about determining whether the rate of technological change is high or low is that nobody knows how to measure the amount of technology.

Technology is an elusive sort of thing. In its most general meaning it is practical knowledge, especially those branches that can be used in building and making goods and services; hence, for instance, the name "College of Advanced Technology." But nobody knows how to measure a community's stock of knowledge. Some attempts have recently been made by counting up the number of scientific articles and technical books that are published year by year. Investigators into this elevating subject have discovered that many more scientific works are published nowadays than in times past. Yet their findings, however full of charm, have nothing to do with solemn questions of public policy or even with the true artistry of measurement. Most of what is in most new books is not new knowledge but old; much of it is wrong; and above all, one piece of new knowledge may outweigh all the new knowledge in the next ten thousand books—if not, Nobel Prizes would be meaningless. It is an oppressive reflection that with all man knows, he still lacks the skill to measure how much he knows.

YET ALTHOUGH technical knowledge cannot be measured directly, perhaps it would be possible to measure that part which is embodied in machinery. To measure machinery and equipment is possible: accountants, statisticians, and economists do it every day, by computing in sophisticated ways its monetary value. But, unfortunately, the monetary value of a piece of capital equipment is only loosely related, if at all, to its technological content. An electronic computer costs more than an abacus. Yet a ship of traditional design costs more than the latest jet airplane, if it is a large ship. An electric motor may cost more now than five years ago, even though the design is unchanged, if the industry has been cartelised. And, on the other hand, as technology improves, some capital goods become cheaper: the current vintage of atomic power stations is said to cost half as much per unit of capacity as did the prototypes of ten years ago. From all of which it follows

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that the growth in the monetary value of a nation's stock of capital goods would be a most unreliable guide to technological change, and perhaps altogether misleading.

A more pertinent way of getting at a measure of technical change would be to ask how fast the national income of highly developed countries is being increased by improvements in technology. It is a question that some of the most brilliant economists have been looking into during the past few years. It is a question full of perplexities and traps, and no consensus has yet been reached about the proper methods of analysis or the real meaning of the results. But whatever conclusions this sort of inquiry may eventually warrant, they will not serve Mr. Crossman's purpose. They will identify the degree to which technological progress has raised national incomes; they will not demonstrate that technological progress, whatever its speed, creates "explosive" social and political problems.

As things stand now, the assertion that technological change is becoming faster cannot be taken as more than a surmise, an impression, a prejudice. Many share it, and it may turn out to be true. But it has a strong flavour of being a preconception that occurs in the minds of active modern men, those who feel that by a curious chance the world began at the same moment that they themselves were born, or at least that never before could men have faced problems of a gravity remotely comparable to those we face now. To anyone who does not share that attitude, it must be apparent that technological change has been rapid and immensely unsettling at many periods in the past. At a time when the total fund of technology was much smaller than now, the introduction of steam power was a colossal change. It revolutionised—if one cares for dramatic terms—the means of transport by land and sea; it helped make the large factory common rather than exceptional; and it greatly intensified social problems such as child labour, industrial disease, unemployment, monopolies, urban growth, and inequality of income—at the same time, of course, that it improved almost everyone's standard of living. An indefinitely long catalogue could be made of other such technological changes ever since the ancient past. Some helped to create social problems, some helped to solve them; all of them in their profusion make it doubtful whether speedy technological change is a problem that peculiarly afflicts this moment in the whole of the world's history and a problem that requires unprecedented solutions.

YET AS POLITICS is not a business in which action waits on the verification of premises, let us assume that technological change is as fast as Mr. Crossman says. It is clear, at any rate, that technological change may create political problems. But before we can tell what it is that scientists in government could do to solve them, we should consider what those problems are about.

One illustration that Mr. Crossman gives is the overcrowding of cities; as he puts it, "urban expansion is detonating every day." The technological cause of the problem is the "improved health services" which have made population increase quickly. The solutions that Mr. Crossman mentions are "family planning" and "adequate town planning." It would be difficult to deny that if parents had fewer children, the demand for space in cities might ease. If people were forbidden to settle in existing cities or were induced to settle in new towns, the existing cities might become less crowded.

Now as it happens, the scientific and even technological aspect of these problems has been solved long ago. Plenty of birth-control techniques are known and the equipment is easily bought. Many people know how to lay out the streets and build the houses that make up new towns. These techniques, like all others, may be improved in due course. But no such techniques will touch the political problem of overcrowding. Political problems exist because different people want incompatible things, not because they lack the technological knowledge of how to get them. Population increases to the dismay of many; the technology of birth-control does not stop the increase because many others positively want large families, have religious or aesthetic scruples about birth-control, are impetuous, careless, or unlucky. Would recruiting scientists into government change any of that? Again, the political problem of overcrowding arises because many prefer to live in big cities while resisting the irrational desire of others to live there too. The resulting questions of policy are whether the growth of big cities should be restricted; if so, who should be forced out; which villages should be enlarged into towns; at whose expense, when, and so forth. None of these questions is technological, for there is no technical mystery about how to build houses in Kent rather than London. The only problem is the purely political one of reaching a set of detailed decisions that do not offend citizens more than they please. Is there any kind of scientist whose training or aptitude peculiarly equip him, more than an experienced politician or civil servant, to reach correct decisions about such problems?

EVEN IF ONE TURNS to a political problem with intensely technological overtones, scientists would have no special capacity for dealing with

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its political implications. For instance, when the British Government was considering whether to finance the *Concorde*, part of the question—whether a supersonic passenger plane *could* be built, and at what cost—was clearly technological. A minister or civil servant would not attempt to answer that question himself; he would ask scientists and engineers. But whether such a plane *should* be built—that is, whether the expenditure of a certain amount of public funds was justified by the probable contribution to the public good—was a political question, and the views of a scientist about that would be worth no more than the views of anybody else and perhaps worth less than those of a skilled politician.

In an age of much technological change, problems may arise such that Parliament, ministers, civil servants, judges, and even private citizens will want technical information and advice. As it is convenient to know where to get good advice, Government may wish to have scientists in its own employ. How many it needs is not more difficult to decide and not less than how many lawyers, teachers, soldiers, or other types of technicians it needs. But it would be a mistake to hire scientists on the assumption that they know how to deal with the political questions that arise from technological change. Although the roads are increasingly clogged with traffic, Mr. Crossman would not propose that government be handed over to chauffeurs.

William Letwin

Pavlov and His Bad Dog

WHEN DOES a technical language become a jargon? Its purpose should be to provide precision and speed of communication among those with a like interest and training. It may not always be easy for an outsider to judge whether this purpose has been adulterated: if for instance the kind of language implies exclusiveness or insidious polemic or disguises a profound want of originality. But perhaps this is difficult too for an insider.

Behaviour Research and Therapy (Pergamon Press, Oxford) with Professor H. J. Eysenck, of the Institute of Psychiatry, Maudsley Hospital, as Editor-in-Chief, is now about ending its first year. Eysenck himself, in his Pelicans and other works has a clear and lively way of writing, with comparatively few technicalities. Other Behaviourist psychologist—F. Z. Young, W. Grey Walter, D. E. Broadbent have too. This strengthens the suspicion that there may be something wrong with the journal's language.

It is of course a technical journal: and I have been looking at it as a mere reasonably intelligent reader who has some experience in trying to express meaning and to handle abstractions. But psychology is a subject which flows in and out of common sense experience and we all have a right and a duty to try and keep up with it: especially if, as here, there seem to be signs of psychological planning and engineering which could profoundly affect what we mean by a human being—both the concept and the actuality.

It may seem unfair to limit oneself to one case. But the one I have selected can be translated into ordinary English without noticeable loss: and, as a rather thin little case, it seems to be thicker in the kind of linguistic evidence I am interested in, than those discussed in the other articles.

I have ventured to invent a technical language to facilitate semantic classification. There seem to be roughly three divisions of style (they sometimes shade into one another)—(1) *Grandiose-inflationary* or *"Bullfrog"* (*B.f.*); (2) *Disguise by obviousness* or *"Poe"* (*E.A.P.*) and (3) *Pejorative reference to unacceptable concepts or other psychological theories*, or *Giving a Name a Bad Dog* (*B.D.*).

THE PAPER by T. Ayllon (Anna State Hospital, Illinois) describes a case of chronic schizophrenia (nine years in hospital) and "intensive treatment of [her] psychotic behaviour by stimulus satiation and food reinforcement." (This meant in practice that she had developed the habit of stealing food and hoarding hospital towels—she was cured of the first by being deprived of a meal, and of the second by being given more towels than she could manage: "reinforcement" can be negative or positive.) In the context it is not clear whether "psychotic" means simply "schizophrenic" or is rather wider: it is certain that the behaviour was a nuisance to the personnel.

> The patient had weighed over 250 pounds for many years.... Because the medical staff regarded her excessive weight as detrimental to her health [*B.f* or *E.A.P.*?] a special diet had been prescribed for her. However the patient refused to diet and continued stealing food.... The implicit belief that verbal instructions are indispensable for learning is part of present day

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psychiatric lore [*B.D.*].[1] In keeping with this notion, prior to this behaviour treatment, the nurses [who had three years' psychiatric training] had tried to persuade the patient to co-operate in dieting... the patient's refusal... was regarded as further evidence of her *mental illness* [*B.D.*].

When withdrawal of positive reinforcement [i.e. meal], was made dependent upon the patient's stealing, this response was eliminated in one week.

During the nine years of hospitalisation the patient collected large numbers of towels and stored them in her room.... To determine the degree of hoarding behaviour [*B.f*] the towels in her room were counted once a week... the number... ranged from 19 to 29.... The routine removal of the towels from the patient's room was discontinued. Instead a programme of stimulus satiation was carried out [*B.f.*]. Intermittently throughout the day, the nurses took a towel to the patient... and simply handed it to her without comment.... Fig. 3 shows the mean [generous, surely?] number of towels per count.... When the number of towels kept in her room reached the 625 mark she started taking a few of them out. Thereafter no more towels were given her [and the number sank to from 1 to 5 a week].

The procedure used to reduce the amount of towel hoarding bears resemblance to satiation of a reinforcer. A reinforcer loses its effect when an excessive amount of that reinforcer is made available.... [*B.f.*]

During the first few weeks of satiation, the patient was observed patting her cheeks with a few towels apparently enjoying them. Later the patient was observed spending much of her time folding and stacking the approximately 600 towels in her room. A variety of remarks were made by the patient regarding receipt of towels. ... *First week*: As the nurse entered the patient's room carrying a towel the patient would smile and say "Oh you found it for me, thank you." *Second week*: When the number of towels given to patient increased rapidly, she told the nurses "Don't give me no more towels I've got enough." *Third week*: "Take them towels away... I can't sit here all night and fold towels." *Fourth and fifth weeks*: "Get those dirty towels out of here." *Sixth week*: After she had started taking the towels out of her room, she remarked to the nurse: "I just can't drag any more of these towels, I just can't."

The quality of these remarks suggests that the initial effect of giving towels to the patient was reinforcing. However as the towels increased they ceased to be reinforcing and *presumably became aversive*. [*B.f.*]

Whether the quality of these remarks is suggestive or not, they are good plain dialogue quite out of keeping with the surrounding language, stating clearly and emphatically, that, at first the patient likes her towels and, that later she hates them.

> The ward nurses, [continues Dr. Ayllon]... found it difficult to reconcile the procedure in this experiment with their *psychiatric orientation*. [*B.D.*] Most nurses subscribed to the *popular psychiatric view* [*B.D.*] which regards hoarding behaviour as a reflection of a deep "need" [*B.D.*] for love and security.

This is meant to be a scientific language. Is it not on the contrary tendentious and ideological? The inverted commas award Bad Dogs to concepts of feeling and value. True, over a year the patient did not, as the "psychiatric" nurses expected, develop substitute symptoms to gratify her supposed "need." And socially she became more acceptable: because she had lost weight her relatives felt less embarrassment about taking her out. (This might, of course, at whatever obscure level, have given her a feeling of "love" or anyway "security.")

Mental hospitals must deal with patients as best they can; and, in and out of hospitals, "love" is in short supply. Who cares to deny that if you *can* restore the sense of being a person in personal relations (love and security) you must achieve a better and more lasting therapy?

I am suggesting that the Bad Dogs are aimed at subjectivism as such: the functional concept. It may seem obvious [*E.A.P.*] that Behaviourism is anti-subjective. But perhaps it is only in its extreme Watsonian or Pavlovian forms that this, as a philosophical tendency, is quite open. The anti-subjectivism may have wider social and human implications than we always grasp.

IT IS USEFUL TO SEE Behaviourist psychology in relation to the philosophical developments of our century, especially the dispute about meaning: scientific or verifiable meaning *versus* "nonsense" (emotive or metaphysical). I should say that Behaviourist psychology brings out and formulates as "scientific" description what is in fact the underlying error and confusion of logical positivism. "Emotive" or "metaphysical" are both misleading terms: what was really being attacked was the whole concept of subjectivity. It is the Behaviourists, philosophical and psychological, who "reify" human subjectivity—"mind," "personality," etc.—in order to destroy it. Biased by their unconscious acceptance of the Cartesian "split" between "Mind" and "Matter," unable, that is, to think in psychosomatic terms, they do not understand that many people are able to use these subjective concepts as useful functions. Some people know what they mean when they use the concept of the subjective individual. They are not likely to take to mysticism, can even use and

[1] Italics are mine unless otherwise stated.

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develop some degree of introspection without emotive confusion, and moreover are not going to mistake their individual purposes for some divine teleology.

The claim that the kind of Behaviourist psychology I am discussing is an "anti-subjectivist ideology" is strengthened by the comparative modesty of other research-workers and theorists who also subscribe to the opinion that the investigation of the brain and nervous system is our most fruitful if not indeed our only way forward in psychology. But these are usually researchers not therapists. D. E. Broadbent's *Behaviour* suggests that maze-learning rats may be left with something like "insight." And W. Grey Walter in *The Living Brain* writes:

> Unfortunately Pavlov's Russian disciples repeating his experiments seem to be content to follow him to the grave of research without ever, so far as is known, asking themselves . . . how the animal decides that a signal is memorable, meaningful, worth responding to.

This suggests a place for "value" and "choice" —strikingly subjective notions. But Professor Eysenck, a strong Pavlovian, tells us that the only scientific psychology consists in the study of behaviour, for this alone is observable, testable, and predictable—because ultimately quantifiable. It will be noted that this appears to assume that the subjective attitudes of scientists themselves are irrelevant, *e.g.* their reasons for choosing some objects of study rather than others, their evaluations and interests. But surely personal factors and relations, however remote, have some influence on the type of science that predominates at any epoch, the kind of science we actually get?

Many of Eysenck's criticisms of Freud's teaching and other "psychiatries" are justified; psycho-analysis is not admitted as "scientific" by, for instance, Karl Popper, who has made a convincing study of the methods and techniques of natural science. No doubt, too, the study of behaviour is an aid to good semantics in fields where it is of prime importance to establish what things are there, and can therefore be referred to—it can help no doubt towards the reduction of political nonsense.

Nevertheless an intensive study of Eysenck's work suggests that he is a bit dazzled by the power of figures. Against the psychotherapist who "apparently argues against the possibility[2] of measurement being applicable to the complexity of the human being," he claims that a diagnosis which finds an unresolved Oedipus Complex in one patient and none in another is itself "an elementary form of measurement." I dare say it is: and it is also in any context a bare formal statement of the lowest power of illumination. Everyone either has something or he has not: everything is either *A* or *not A*.

Human beings are at their most measurable when in their coffins—*"I've measured it from side to side, It's three feet long and two feet wide."* (Even here it wasn't the most interesting thing that could be said.) Is a strictly objectivist quantitative approach ever going to tell us anything new or interesting about what so many of us persist in regarding as our "personalities," our peculiar subjective "insides" (which are not hallucinative even if we make mistakes about them)?

It is worth noting that Professor Eysenck is optimistic, some might say hubristic, about human phenomena which fascinate us but have so far proved resistant to quantitative formulation. Can we measure the strength and distribution of certain aesthetic reactions? Again I dare say we can. Some colours, it appears, are directly liked more than others. On the basis of these simple, or atomic reactions Professor Eysenck hopes to build a structure of "good taste" and also to give in time an objective definition of "Beauty"—which he believes apparently that artists are after. "Good taste" appears to result from a straight-forward majority decision. At present Professor Eysenck is careful to say that his theory is inadequate to deal with the tremendous complexities of the great works of art themselves: "But nevertheless a beginning which promises to lead us to a more adequate account in due course."[3] A beginning to what? And what course?

Arthur Koestler's *The Act of Creation* is a powerful and original contribution to aesthetic thinking, as well as towards undermining Behaviouristic trends in philosophy. But even he has not given sufficient weight to Behaviourist aesthetics as such. He makes only a passing reference to Eysenck: and he at least suggests that the crudities of J. B. Watson's aesthetics (referred to both in the book and in his recent broadcasts) are so patently absurd that they have not had permanent after-effects. He quotes Watson on Art as follows:

> How do we get new verbal creations such as a poem or a brilliant essay? The answer is that we get them by manipulating words, shifting them about until a new pattern is hit upon. . . . How do you suppose Patou builds a new gown? Has he any "picture in his mind" of what the gown is to look like when it is finished? He has not. He calls his model in, picks up a new piece of silk, throws it around her, he pulls it in here, he pulls it out there. . . . He manipulates the material until it takes on the semblance of a dress. . . . The painter plies his trade in the

[2] *Sense and Nonsense in Psychology.*
[3] Ibid.

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same way, nor can the poet boast of any other method.

This may be as silly as it is bumptious. But Behaviourist aesthetics is by no means a *sideline*: it is a response to what is recognised as one of the trickiest challenges of our obstinate subjective sense. In *Doubt and Certainty in Science*, F. Z. Young writes:

> The thesis is that we shall be better able to train artists and scientists by study of the action of the brain than by talking about some quality called "imagination."

Who are "we"? And did talking about any quality ever train anyone? This is in a context where Young is objecting to the subjectivist view of "feeling"....

> What we have called our pains and pleasures, *assuming them to be in some way fixed entities*, are in fact the imperfect ways we have learned to describe what hinders and helps our lives. By recognising that pain and pleasure do not "exist."...

Artists, unfortunately for the Behaviourist, often rather like and even foster their tensions, and so make use of them to project images of what appears to be human experience. (This doesn't mean that they don't also "dislike what they fancy they feel" if I may apply the Christian Science limerick to Professor Young's views.)

About aesthetics the boffinated and computer-minded are notably given to a spirit of prophesying. In an essay in the *Times Literary Supplement* series called "Freeing the Mind" (a discussion of computers applied to scholarship), Margaret Masterman concludes:

> When a computer is used, *but reliably as it will be*, to paint pictures and write poems... will the programmer be an artist, or will he be a scientist?

By the way, Professor Max Bense of the Stuttgart Technische Hochschule is already carrying out Miss Masterman's hopes and making computer poems. Here "meaning is a complicating factor, a nuisance."

> It is only a text in itself, in the sense of pure stochastic textual material, that suggests the notion of beauty or non-beauty in itself, *i.e.*, of pure aesthetic information.[4]

There is a certain eugenic eupepsia about all this—*future-mindedness*, Sir Charles Snow might say. Behaviourism seems to fall in with the evolutionary enthusiasm of many scientific humanists: and means to tell us what we ought to be.

THIS BRINGS ME BACK to the journal, *Behaviour Research and Therapy*. A "therapy" must claim to help or heal human beings. Doesn't it also imply something about what is a human being and what you might mean by human development? There might still be much to learn from those who have spent their life and work in thinking about this: for instance, some artists, some scientists, some moral thinkers. Or some patients. One here or there might try to mumble to you what he really wants and so give you a slant on the "moral future of mankind."

In all systems of (psycho-) therapy, the patient is at a disadvantage. The therapist is often trying (not of necessity deliberately) to impose a "norm." Even if he isn't, the patient can't help thinking that the therapist somehow represents such a concept. But on the evidence of these journals the patient of a behaviour therapist is at a double disadvantage. The Behaviour therapist doesn't even have to believe that his patient's "neurosis" exists. Sometimes this anti-subjectivism is modified: Costello (*Behav.Res.Ther.*) boils or waters down a typical criticism of Behaviourism to the view that a

[4] In his review of Koestler's *The Act of Creation* Professor Stephen Toulmin writes: "Are electronic computers of a kind already in existence capable of performing those particular activities which Arthur Koestler recognises as distinctively creative and originative? The answer to the question is, Yes."

Explicitly this refers to scientific thinking only. It doesn't deal with what Koestler has to say about the original activities of the artist. Are the computers *really* going to be original enough to write our poems for us—*reliably* (whatever that may mean). In the quotation from Bense, the relevant and significant phrase is "aesthetic information." This surely suggests that a poem is a collection of data, and that the principle of selecting these data to produce the optimum result, can be arrived at objectively, as the solution of a problem which itself, theoretically at least, can be objectively stated.

Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* has been thoroughly analysed so as to show the connections between the words on the page and Coleridge's reading-matter (the "info." stored in his memory-traces). But what about the thousands of books Coleridge must have read which didn't qualify for a place in the poem? In an essay in *Freeing the Mind* (quoted above) Ralph Shaw remarks: "There is substantial testimony that creative thought is generated, or at least stimulated, in the prepared mind, by reading materials that are apparently irrelevant."

What then *is* Coleridge's (or any poet's) principle of selection? Has it not something to do with obscure private satisfactions, quite apart from their demonstrable suitability in an actual "text"—which could only be known even to himself after they had begun to express themselves?

In other words, a lifetime's delighted practice with words and meanings is an integral part of a poet's act of composition. Are we going to be able to build these "reliably" into our computers?

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"personal relation" (implying, of course, that there is another "person" to have the relation with) is useful in *some* neurotic disorders but not in others. But in the main, Eysenck's slogan, *"There is no neurosis underlying the symptom but merely the symptom itself"* floats like a smoke-advertisement over this built-up area.[5]

If you can't recognise intellectual and emotional disorders how can you have any idea of what would be a will to order? Or that to some human beings what is most characteristically human is that tension, which feels necessary, between the desire to be "free" (self-identifying, self-choosing) and the desire to be related (to "love"). The duality may cause discomforts and growing pains. Are we to remove them with the other "symptoms"?

Kathleen Nott

Stauffenberg's Bomb

TWENTY YEARS ago—on July 20th, 1944—officers of the High Command and the General Staff of the *Wehrmacht* which had conquered most of Europe tried to murder Hitler. But the bomb which Colonel Claus Schenk Count von Stauffenberg planted in the *Führer*'s headquarters in East Prussia, while killing other participants in the staff conference held there, failed to eliminate Hitler. He was blown out of a window by the blast and escaped with slight wounds. If the conference, as was usual, had been held in an underground concrete shelter—and not in a hut above ground—not a single participant could have survived. Thus the plot failed, and the chief conspirators were executed on the same evening at Army Headquarters in the Bendlerstrasse in Berlin. Hundreds of others were arrested, tried, and sentenced to death by the infamous "People's Court" or thrown into concentration camps.

Count Stauffenberg was the heart and soul of the conspiracy. In front of the firing squad he proclaimed anew his burning love for his country and died with the words: "Long live our sacred Germany!" Stauffenberg's ardour and drive were essential not only for the planting of the bomb at Hitler's headquarters, but equally for the issuing of orders from the Bendlerstrasse, where his fellow-conspirators waited passively until he returned and took control. Although he had been severely wounded in North Africa—he lost an eye, one hand, and two fingers of the other hand—he managed to set the mechanism of the time-bomb. He then withdrew from the conference room, watched the explosion from a distance, and flew back to Berlin convinced that Hitler was dead. It was on this vital issue that the success of the coup depended. It was Stauffenberg who was the true hero of the 20th of July, rather than the conservative, right-wing heads of the conspiracy who were busy drawing up lists of future cabinets and distributing posts in the administration: *viz.*, Carl Goerdeler (the former mayor of Leipzig), Ludwig Beck (the former Chief of the General Staff), and Ulrich von Hassel (the former ambassador to Rome). They aimed at a return to the *status quo*, if not that of the Weimar Republic, then that of the Hohenzollern monarchy. They wanted to turn the clock back, and were therefore considered reactionaries by the younger members of the opposition.

What, however, were Stauffenberg's political ideas and plans, and those of the younger officers who were his political associates? We know that originally Stauffenberg—as so many of his contemporaries—was quite uncritical of Hitler. For a long time he accepted him as the symbol of the resurrection of the German nation, of the "breaking of the shackles of Versailles," so ardently desired by many young Germans.

> When on the 30th of January, 1933, an enthusiastic crowd celebrated the victory of the National Socialists in the streets of Bamberg, a young lieutenant in full uniform put himself at the head of the procession. The officer corps to which he belonged and his military superiors considered this conduct improper and reprimanded him. The lieutenant submitted with composure to their reproaches and said to his comrades that the great soldiers of the time of the Wars of Liberation would have shown more sympathy with such a genuine rising of the people. . . .[1]

At that time Stauffenberg was twenty-five years old. He was the great-grandson of Neidhardt von Gneisenau who, together with Scharnhorst, had inaugurated the Prussian military reforms of the Napoleonic period and became one of the great military leaders of the Wars of Liberation. The great-grandson, then a lieutenant in a Bavarian cavalry regiment, felt much more closely akin to their spirit than to that of the "office generals" who directed the *Reichswehr* from the Bendlerstrasse and were constantly engaged in intrigues and political schemes.

[5] New semantics: my dictionary strongly implies that a "symptom" is always "of" something.

[1] Hermann Foertsch, *Schuld und Verhängnis* (Stuttgart, 1951), p. 22, on the basis of a report of Colonel Sauerbruch, who served as a cadet in the same regiment as Stauffenberg. In general, see Bodo Scheurig, *Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg* (Berlin, 1964).

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The *Reichswehr* at that time numbered only 100,000 men; it was separated by its whole structure and social composition from the nation and the broad masses of the people. Many young officers ardently hoped that the National Socialist movement would enable them to free the army from this isolation and to build a bridge to the people. In 1929 Lieutenant Henning von Tresckow—who was to become one of the leaders of the military opposition to National Socialism—lectured in the Potsdam officers' mess on the *Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft*, the "destruction of the bondage of interest" then propagated by Nazi theorists. On other occasions, too, von Tresckow tried to influence the officers of his regiment in favour of Hitler. The lieutenants of another "feudal" Potsdam regiment—both were the traditional regiments of the Prussian guards and had a very high proportion of aristocratic officers—subscribed to similar views. As early as 1929 leaflets circulated in the *Reichswehr*, written by young officers. They began with the apodictic statement: "The spirit of the *Reichswehr* is dead." All officers who supported the "national revolution" were called upon to band together and to resolve

> that the *Reichswehr* will not fire on a national uprising but ally itself with an uprising of the people, that it becomes the nucleus of the people's army of the future and of the national liberation.

When the authors of this leaflet were tried by the High Court at Leipzig for attempted treason, another lieutenant who was destined to play a leading part in the opposition to Hitler wrote to his fiancée:

> With most of what they (the accused) declare we can unfortunately only agree, and you will read many things which only too often have aroused my indignation also. That is perhaps the advantage of the whole affair that the eyes of the people in charge will be opened to the enormous dissatisfaction in the officer corps....

Two weeks later he wrote:

> Without doubt the accused have acted wrongly and have violated the rules of military discipline. But are not their grievances also ours? All this I have told you often enough and at least 90 per cent of the officer corps think the same way....

WITHIN THE OFFICER CORPS there thus developed a gulf between the older generation, who had served under the Kaiser and who remained loyal to their monarchist principles even under the Republic, and the younger officers who had been schoolboys during World War I. The older officers put their trust in the octogenarian Field-Marshal von Hindenburg who was the President of the Republic and saw in him a kind of regent of the House of Hohenzollern—until the day when the latter would re-occupy its proper place. Naturally, the more intelligent officers realised that for the time being there was little prospect of a monarchical restoration, but that did not change their basic attitude.

It was thus no accident that the military opposition which began to emerge in 1938 after Hitler's dismissal of the Minister of War, General von Blomberg, and the Chief of the Army Command, General von Fritsch, planned to arrest Hitler and to proclaim the eldest son of the Crown Prince, Prince William of Prussia, regent of the *Reich*. During the war these schemes assumed a more concrete shape. As Prince William was killed during the battle of France in May, 1940, the conservative opposition-leaders (especially Goerdeler and General Beck) now thought of the second son of the Crown Prince, Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, as their candidate, or—as a preliminary solution—of the Crown Prince himself. In this sense Beck and Goerdeler then sounded out the younger officers who had meanwhile joined the opposition. But Stauffenberg strongly pronounced against the plan, and it seems likely that his opinion was shared by his contemporaries.

YET THEIR ENMITY to Goerdeler's plans went much further. Stauffenberg suspected him and the other "civilians" of aiming at the restoration of "the republican-democratic-parliamentarian *Systemzeit*" (meaning the Weimar régime). Therefore Goerdeler in April, 1944, sent one of his friends, a lawyer, to Stauffenberg, to outline to him Goerdeler's "constructive and new ideas." They then "agreed that in no respect was the old state of affairs to be resuscitated...." Two months later, however, a conflict occurred between Goerdeler and Stauffenberg because the latter, without informing Goerdeler, had established contacts with leading Socialists, probably to gain their support against Goerdeler's restorative schemes; in Goerdeler's opinion "such negotiations did not belong to the province of the military...." But when an old Social Democrat informed Stauffenberg of the plans of the trade unions he found them equally unattractive. This is not surprising, as the aims of the Socialists were as "restorative" as those of Goerdeler; they too desired the revival of the former trade unions and political parties to which the younger officers objected.

Very similar were the ideas of a young officer who was closely associated with Stauffenberg, Lieutenant Peter Count Yorck von Wartenburg,

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the scion of another illustrious general of the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon. In Yorck's opinion, Goerdeler and the men around him were "too old and reactionary to form a stable government"; they were working for "a decidedly reactionary régime, the natural precondition of which was the reformation of the old trade unions and parties, which would bring about a return to the situation of 1932..."—the year before Hitler came into power. Yorck, like Stauffenberg, desired "a much wider basis... and the inclusion of the working classes as far as the left wing of the Social Democrats...." Count Yorck was an active member of the so-called Kreisau Circle—named after the estate of another Count who belonged to the opposition, Helmuth James Count von Moltke, the descendant of yet another famous Prussian general—and several well-known Socialists belonged to the same group.

WHEN STAUFFENBERG DISCUSSED his own political ideas with the Socialists he emphasised that "a new social order was necessary"; but he expressed his wish "that the traditional values should not be cast overboard and that the historical achievements of the nobility must be taken into account...." He also produced an exposé of his social and political conceptions; but this was formulated in such a way "that his true political aims did not become clear." The views he expressed were rather conservative for a "revolutionary" officer who has been suspected of sympathies with Bolshevism and with Soviet Russia. Professor Gerhard Ritter, on the other hand, has assumed that Stauffenberg was against a land reform and the partition of the large estates of the nobility. In spite of all his radicalism this son of an ancient noble family was extremely conscious of the value of tradition, as he showed already in 1933 by his remark about "the great soldiers of the time of the Wars of Liberation." But to him tradition had a meaning very different from the intentions of Beck and Goerdeler which were centred in the Hohenzollern monarchy.

The same principles are reflected in what a fellow-conspirator reports about Stauffenberg:

> In one respect he was clear and determined: he did not want Hitler to engulf the army... in his catastrophe; to him—a soldier through and through—the salvation of the fatherland and the salvation of the army had identical meanings.... The young colonel cannot deny his ideological and professional origins. What he plans is the deliverance of Germany by political officers who renounce the corruption and the misgovernment....

Since the early 19th century two different traditions existed in the Prussian army: the national revolutionary tradition of Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Boyen who fought for internal and external liberation, and the strictly conservative tradition of Roon and Moltke which Beck had inherited, the attitude of absolute loyalty to the king. In 1938 Beck resigned from the army because he disapproved of Hitler's plans of aggression against Czechoslovakia. But he was against any opposition to these plans, and equally against any collective action of the generals in favour of General von Fritsch when he was ousted from his post as Chief of the Army Command under a pretext by the Hitler government. Beck then, in 1938, declared to another general who urged him to take action: "mutiny and revolution are words that do not exist in the vocabulary of a German soldier." Beck was not a Yorck (who in 1812 concluded the treaty of Tauroggen with the Russians against the orders of his king). But in the great-grandson of Yorck and in the great-grandson of Gneisenau there remained alive the spirit of independence and rebellion—if need be against the king.

YET STAUFFENBERG WAS NOT pro-Russian, and not even in favour of opening negotiations with the Russians. On the contrary (according to the evidence collected by the Gestapo), he "adhered steadfastly to the view that an agreement with England or with the English military leaders for a common front against Russia must be possible...," although some of his fellow-conspirators tried to convince him that such a course could not be pursued. Nor was he impressed by the proclamation of the "National Committee for a Free Germany" which was founded in Russia and consisted of captured German generals and officers. It stood too clearly under Soviet influence and was too obviously a tool of Stalin's policy.

WE KNOW very little about Stauffenberg's political programme, for only fragments have survived his death. There is the draft of an oath which runs:

> We desire a new order that makes all Germans the bearers of the state and guarantees to them law and justice; but we despise the lie of equality and bow before the ranks created by nature. We desire a people that, rooted in the soil of their homeland, remains close to the natural forces, that finds happiness and satisfaction in working within its given spheres.... We desire leaders who, drawn from all ranks of the people, and linked with the divine powers, rise above all by their magnanimity, discipline, and sacrifice.

The sharp rebuttal of "the lie of equality" and respect for "the ranks created by nature" show how far Stauffenberg's ideas were removed

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from those of democratic socialists. While the older generation of the conspirators aimed at a restoration of the monarchy, Stauffenberg and his friends had no real alternative to a constitutional state with its parties and trade unions. The younger officers dreamt of a society that was to be governed in a patriarchical and traditional fashion by a natural élite. In accordance with their social origin they saw this élite above all in the families of the old nobility. But would these be able to create and to guide a new state? Would the lower orders in the 20th century be willing to accept the leadership of the nobility, especially in a country in which all ties of tradition had been destroyed by the revolution of 1918, the inflation of the early 1920s, the slump of the 1930s, and finally by Hitler's dictatorship? Apparently these questions were not discussed by the officers.

In reality the ideas of Stauffenberg and his friends—their pronounced feeling of belonging to an élite, their aristocratic attitude, their rejection of the bourgeois and the plebeian alike, their romantic and revolutionary nationalism, their emphasis on certain Prussian traditions—had, in the years before 1933, been widely discussed in the circles of "national revolutionaries" and of the youth movement which existed outside the political parties. To anyone familiar with the atmosphere of German romantic nationalism in the 1920s, their conceptions are oddly familiar. They clearly owed much to the writings of Ernst Jünger, who at that time had been the oustanding spokesman of the "front soldiers" of World War I, of their longing and their mysticism, of their opposition to the new Republic and the democratic order, and of their fervent nationalism. Until 1923 Jünger was an officer of the *Reichswehr*. In his whole ideology and thought he stood very close to the younger officers, even if they were not fully conscious of this. True, Jünger later retired from all participation in political life and occupied an isolated post of observation—he knew of the conspiracy against Hitler but did not join it—yet his earlier writings continued to influence the younger generation.

This romantic and revolutionary nationalism was the spiritual background of Stauffenberg and many younger officers, a background far more familiar to them than socialism or communism, democracy or parliamentarianism. It is not surprising that their more conservative fellow-conspirators considered them revolutionaries, even revolutionaries who sympathised with the East. In reality they too stood politically on the right, but not in the camp of the traditional right-wing parties. Their ideas did not exercise any influence on the political developments in Germany after the war; but the same would have happened if the *coup d'état* which they had planned so zealously had succeeded. On their conception no new state could have been built.

What we must admire in Stauffenberg are his great courage, his fervent patriotism, the unbounded energy with which he overcame all handicaps—without these the bomb would never have exploded. In contrast with Beck and others he was not a *cunctator*. Above all, Stauffenberg's sacrifice has remained valid. For the national consciousness of the Germans of to-day it is of the greatest importance that there were men who dared to resist the tyrant. Stauffenberg's deed vindicated the honour of the conspirators.

F. L. Carsten

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The Dialectics of Despair

On Herbert Marcuse — By JULIUS GOULD

THIS is a new book in an old mood.[1] Professor Marcuse is out not only to interpret the world but also to change it. He brings to the task an equipment rarely found among professional philosophers and an idiom—Hegelian, Marxist, and Freudian—that is altogether his own. In the tradition of Karl Mannheim he attempts a diagnosis of our times—something which social scientists and philosophers to-day abjure. It is also a polemic *with* our times, a steady often repetitive condemnation. Especially exposed to this polemic are the intellectuals who, in Marcuse's account, are betraying their calling. For, in the full Marx-Mannheim pursuit of the sociology of knowledge, he seeks to show how the categories of thought, the epistemology of science and morals, are all governed (and, in his view, corrupted) by the "forces of domination" in advanced societies.

Let us begin with the modern "intellectual" and his failings. His timidity is, by now, a standing reproach. Few of us feel able to capture—let alone condemn—the spirit of our age: nor can we sense, with prophetic certainty, the spirit of the next. If the philosopher or social scientist shows zeal at all, it is now to perfect his methods or qualify his judgments. This is really a cool professionalism, alive to the complexity of things but seeking out the concrete manageable objects with which its methods can cope. The grand syntheses of an earlier time (and the even grander political passions) are left behind. Where 19th-century writers speculated, we (or our machines) can only calculate. Where they thought in epochs (both backwards and forwards), we are confined to the present tense. This confinement robs the intellectual of his historical role. Modern intellectuals may not knowingly truckle before contemporary values (though some do so with pleasure), but in their usefulness to society they absorb and uphold a spineless conformism. By limiting their horizon, by becoming technique-bound and method-bound, the intellectuals commit a new kind of treason—one more potent and deep-seated than the old. For, at least in the Western world, ideological passions never became part of "established" values. The new intellectualism, in contrast, is built into the "established" order: and those who dominate society are all too skilled at controlling the vanity and concreteness of the scribes. Few critical postures on domestic or foreign affairs will thus emerge. The scribes will buttress, where they do not actually celebrate, the waste and irrationality of modern society: and they will subscribe to the Cold War ideology and its myths. The intellectual's role, we are assured, has been perverted by a sick society: and he is made to do its business instead of his own. What is more—and worse—he enjoys his perversion: instead of protesting the mindlessness of the social system he takes part, like everyone else, in its stupid and dangerous trivialities.

These familiar charges echo, with some novel overtones, through the pages of Professor Marcuse's book. I do not accept the bill of indictment, but it is presented here with vigour and with a genuine, if exaggerated, concern. It is only occasionally (when, for example, Professor Marcuse is outraged beyond endurance by such disparate figures as Herman Kahn and Ludwig Wittgenstein) that the polemic slips over into scornful abuse. As will be obvious (and as Marcuse acknowledges in his Introduction), his critical conclusions are very similar to those of C. Wright Mills. But the methods of Marcuse are, in general, more serious and dignified: they are also—but that is another matter—more high-flown. Mills, for all his distaste for America, was profoundly American—in his populist assumptions and his free-ranging, often naïve moralism. Marcuse has lived long in America, but his roots are elsewhere: in European Marxism and in Weimar Germany. He is haunted by the intellectual task of squaring Marxism (not, of course, Stalinism)

[1] *One-Dimensional Man*. By HERBERT MARCUSE. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 42s.

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with the facts of social development, with the past and future course of industrial society. However much "capitalism" may have changed from the free-for-all condemned by Marx, it remains for Marcuse a source of tragic corruption. If it has not collapsed on the lines forecast by Marx, other ways can and must be found for the "disintegration of the system." This is a task which those who are not themselves Marxists will find less pressing. We may be wrong, but can we rule out the possibility of yet further advances "within the system"—much needed advances in living standards and the use of real leisure? This sort of question is no answer to Marcuse. For his sense of social sickness has a further source: the Nazi triumph over reason and civilisation. Like many Marxists of his generation he is seized, at times extravagantly, by the pervasive risk of "fascism" and by the fragility of existing (as distinct from ideal) democratic institutions. This goes beyond a proper scepticism about democratic façades. It comes near to the view that the whole edifice of democracy is a dangerous illusion. Perhaps Marcuse is committed to this by his "dialectical theory" (of which more later), by the remark of Ernst Bloch that he cites with approval: "...that which is cannot be true." But is it more than a deep-seated habit of mind? For one who lived through Weimar and who saw his countrymen set up Auschwitz, the smell of barbarity and repression is almost universal. A truly original sin was committed by his generation, and one can see why he is dedicated to expiating it. We may sympathise with his emotion and yet reject his analysis.

ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN sets out to depict the condition of advanced industrial societies, but it does not rest, or claim to rest, upon any vast inductive, comparative study. Primarily, it is a critique of the United States. Marcuse is one of those for whom the American dream has become the American nightmare: a state of affairs in which vital human dignities are affronted, in which basic human needs have been distorted. It is a realm of necessity whose key quality is that of repression, both cultural and psychological. It is a world where the political and economic authorities have cozened the mass of the population into welcoming the chains that bind them. Objectively there is repression: the felt satisfactions of the ordinary man are set within a "repressive" framework. Subjectively "individuals identify themselves with the existence which is imposed upon them and have in it their own development and satisfaction." Similarly: "the inner dimension of the mind in which opposition to the status quo can take root is whittled down." One-dimensional man is *homo conformans* at many levels. Political and intellectual conflict is smoothed over by a modest yet evasive empiricism. High culture and "lower" culture overlap as "ideas become materialised." Through vulgarisation the classics of literature are re-made: "The interest and function of these works have fundamentally changed. If they once stood in contradiction to the status quo, this contradiction is now flattened out." All this has its counterpart, perhaps even its roots, in the realm of instinct and libido.

> For example, compare love-making in a meadow and in an automobile, on a lovers' walk outside the town walls and on a Manhattan street. In the former cases, the environment partakes of and invites libidinal cathexis and tends to be eroticised. Libido transcends beyond the immediate erotogenic zones—a process of non-repressive sublimation. In contrast, a mechanised environment seems to block such self-transcendence of libido. Impelled in the striving to extend the field of erotic gratification, libido becomes less "polymorphous," less capable of eroticism beyond localised sexuality, and the *latter* is intensified.

Marcuse, of course, is more agitated about the political than the erotic sickness of America. Despite his saving-clauses, I am left with the

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impression that he undervalues the positive uses of the "affluence" we have already attained. In one place, at least, he compares the Affluent Society to Hell. Once at least he lapses into unhistorical nostalgia: what he calls the "pre-technological world" was, he claims, "a world in which man and nature were not yet organised as things and instrumentalities." What is more serious than these lapses, he seems to play down the peculiar achievement of the working classes in many societies—his own no less than mine. By sheer politics, without benefit of the dialectic, they have legitimised their claims. The idea of citizenship is *not* pure ideology. Of course there are gaps, often shameful ones, in its coverage, but in a substantial and unprecedented way its rights *are* enjoyed and their extension is an urgent and continuing priority. And all extensions will rest upon two "old-fashioned" requirements: first, a continuing growth of real productivity; and second, sanguine political pressure realistically applied. It is far too soon to despair of these arrangements, for whatever their faults may be they are the best arrangements we have got.

This would, I am sure, sound much too cheerful and speculative for Marcuse. For his pessimism is implicit in the way, right from the start, in which he defines his theme. I fear that one defect of the grand manner has always been a certain looseness of definition. But what are we to make of the following:

> By virtue of the way it has organised its technological base, contemporary industrial society tends to be totalitarian. For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political co-ordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic technical co-ordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole. Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but also a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a "pluralism" of parties, newspapers, "countervailing powers," etc.

This clarifies neither the notion of totalitarianism nor that of industrial society, and its result can only be to blur all distinctions. It may well be that in some sense there is a "tendency" towards "totalitarianism" in advanced (or, for that matter, emerging) societies of very different kinds. But in fact the "tendency" has only been actualised in a few societies, among which the United States or Great Britain are emphatically not included. A similar looseness of thought prompts his rhetorical question: "Is there to-day, in the orbit of advanced industrial civilisation, a society which is not under an authoritarian *régime*?" This blanket-approach eliminates, without explaining, the differences between industrial orders—notably, but not solely, the distinction between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.

In all recent phases of the Cold War, critics have held that each Superpower is becoming a mirror-image of the other and that some "convergence," whether welcome or not, is to be expected. For Professor Marcuse some such convergence between "opposites" is perhaps presupposed by "dialectical theory." Yet the despised empirical sociologist may have the truth on his side—even where dialectics are against him. Of course there are resemblances between the Superpowers, but there are profound differences as well. These differences are not only, in the broadest sense, cultural—differences in societal tone.[2] There are divergences which stem from the still different levels of economic development to be found in the countries compared. If we try to assess the similarities and divergences in a cautious systematic way, we must fall, let us face it, into the vice of sociological concreteness.... In general, one is uneasy at Professor Marcuse's apparent liberation from attention to historical circumstance. It is all the more remarkable in that Marcuse refuses (and the refusal does him credit) to worry lest he be accused of "historicism." The method of dialectics to which he attaches such importance is supposed to yield a special kind of "historical truth." His readers may be forgiven if, on occasion, they doubt whether dialectical respect for historical truth entails respect for historical *evidence* as this is normally understood. So far as it is concerned, as much of this book is concerned, with the United States, the dialectical method might have suggested a worthier, more historically-grounded critique. Surely opposing principles can co-exist within one social system? Is everything in America's past and present as dark as *One-Dimensional Man* implies? Whatever one's judgment about the crudities and fictions which mark American life at mid-century, it is false to say that they outweigh everything else. There is, after all, an American pattern of egalitarianism and anti-élitism which some Europeans have been known to envy. This has deep historical roots but, significantly, no

[2] At one stage Marcuse concedes

> "...for the administered individual, pluralistic administration is far better than total administration. One institution might protect him against the other: one organisation might mitigate the impact of the other: possibilities of escape and redress can be calculated. The rule of law, no matter how restricted, is still infinitely safer than rule above or without law."

He is quite right. But what then remains of the premise of *general* totalitarianism?

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serious place in a "dialectical" historical record. Nor does this record admit of the heterogeneity of American life: the regional and other diversities so fascinating to the unhappy empiricist and so invisible to the Logic of Reason.

MARCUSE'S IDEAL of social health is of a society qualitatively different from anything at present known. The *aim* is a total one, a restatement of human happiness and freedom; the *prerequisite* is the redefinition of needs. Existence is to be pacified: this means "the development of man's struggle with man and with nature, under conditions where the competing needs... are no longer organised by vested interests in domination and scarcity....." To-day, energy, in all senses, is channelled "into the handling of goods and services which satisfy the individual, while rendering him incapable of achieving an existence of his own, unable to grasp the possibilities which are repelled by his satisfaction." The ideal of autonomy, on the other hand, "demands conditions in which the repressed dimensions of experience can come to life again: their liberation demands repression of the heteronomous needs . . . which organise life in this society." In many ways this is a very noble and relevant ideal, one which, taken out of its dialectical dress, might command widespread assent. But, for a Marxist, assent is not enough. Such an ideal has to be demonstrably—or as earlier Marxists used to say "scientifically"—grounded in the ultimate stuff, the "relations of production." Now Marcuse is absolutely honest about this Marxist crux. Whatever may once have been asserted by Marxists, to-day "the critical theory" has a point of weakness: "its inability to demonstrate the liberating tendencies *within* the established society." This weakness reflects the new, post-bourgeois, techniques of "domination," so much more effective than the old.

In discussing both America and Russia, Marcuse has a try at harnessing the dialectic to the potential of automation. Growing productivity, in a quite new industrial setting, might cut the "chain that tied the individual to the machinery" and make possible the desired "historical transcendence." But, quite clearly, the effort—not a worthless one—does not satisfy him. The book ends on a note of quiet despair. We must make—presumably by way of example—the "absolute refusal": the demand "for the end of domination—the only truly revolutionary exigency and the event that would validate the achievements of industrial civilisation." In the author's very last words: "It is only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given to us."

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ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN is much concerned with the role of the intellectual in the "repressed society." I have already sketched the unflattering view of the intellectual professions held jointly by Marcuse and Mills. Given the premises from which these critics move (the Marx-Mannheim platform), they are understandably in anguish. Whatever else the intellectuals of advanced societies are up to, they are not acting as a revolutionary leaven, detached from the class-structure and freed from the blinkers imposed by "false consciousness." Marcuse is at his best when he describes the moral consequences of, for example, behaviourism in the social sciences; and even those who in no way share his assumptions will share his concern. Many intellectuals, especially in philosophy and the socio-political sciences, have become accustomed to thinking small. Trivialities abound, covered up by ritual scientism and pretentious language. The distinction between "facts" and "values" is vastly overworked. There is quantophrenia—an obsession with statistics as the sole ground of certitude in a changing world. Some of this is to the pecuniary advantage of the intellectuals: a narrow professionalism pays off, not least in prestige. Yet on so large a theme there is more to be said. The critics, with their by now routine onslaughts, are both too sweeping and too narrow. Some of what looks like scholastic triviality may be necessary labour. Much of what is denounced as jargon, as status symbols of the ignorant, may be a painful, unavoidable groping for a much needed scientific discourse. Nor have the ideas of freedom and equality totally vanished from the social sciences. So far as this field in Britain is concerned, one can argue that it has shown, and still shows, excessive moralism in the service of desirable causes: and that there has been a corresponding failure to think in theoretical terms. Certainly the fashionable critics, even in the United States, have no monopoly over the traditional, wider concerns of social science. Not every social scientist is a mindless word-spinner or computer-attendant. In this book Professor Marcuse gives off a good deal of heat on these issues. He is often both acute and amusing, but spoils his effect both by exaggeration and by selective interpretation of his foes. He is specially hot on the Oxford school of "linguistic analysis," always an open target for pseudo-sociological attacks. Oxford has seduced philosophy from its great concerns and has turned it into yet another tool of "the administered society." I have read many critiques of recent Oxford philosophy but I have not, till now, seen anything as odd (and unintentionally revealing about the critic) as the following:

> Analytic philosophy often spreads the atmosphere of denunciation and investigation by committee. The intellectual is called on the carpet. What do you mean when you say . . . ? Don't you conceal something? . . .

Can the gap between Gilbert Ryle and Joe McCarthy really be bridged so smoothly? Shouldn't someone have told Marcuse about the Oxford habit of tutorial inquisition, a custom perhaps as painful or as limiting as Senatorial inquisition but, surely, "qualitatively different"?

MARCUSE'S OWN STANDPOINT is that of "dialectical" or "critical" theory to which he counterposes "anti-critical" procedures. What is involved in dialectical procedures is not difficult to grasp: whether it amounts to a meaningful "theory" is highly questionable. Dialectics is a way of describing methods that allow of "open development" and emphasises, even requires, a fruitful dialogue or relationship between "opposites." Such a method would be, in the language of this book, "two-dimensional"—in that it does not reduce, in politics or thought, the distinction between alternatives to a flat one-dimensional monochrome. Marcuse is aware that dialectics can be fraudulently as well as honestly deployed—that they have been degraded in the past into Stalinist mumbo-jumbo. He is, indeed, passionately honest about this. But he does not go on to enquire whether there may not be something in the "logic of dialectics" which lends itself more aptly than other logics to the service of distortion. I am certainly not convinced that it would be an unqualified advantage to replace the "spurious" concreteness of conventional logic or empiricism with the more dramatic dialectical truths. Marcuse, as I have noted, seems to be polishing the dialectics of despair. In this book he is often carried away, with admirable consistency, into the general, rather windy statements inseparable from this *genre*. And I suspect that these statements derive less from any logic, old or new, than from an act of faith.

> When historical content enters into the dialectical concept and determines methodologically its development and function, dialectical thought attains the concreteness which links the structure of thought to that of reality. Logical truth becomes historical truth.

Or again:

> This negative freedom—*i.e.*, freedom from the oppressive and ideological power of given facts—is the *a priori* of the historical dialectic.

On some level of abstraction Professor Marcuse may be absolutely right, but it is awfully diffi-

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Avant Garde

At the beginning of August THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT published the first of two specially enlarged issues devoted to the avant garde movement throughout the world—primarily in literature, but also in the other arts wherever they seem related. Entitled *The Changing Guard*, it confined itself chiefly to the English speaking nations and carried statements from (among others) W. S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Maurice Girodias and Michael Horovitz.

The second number, *Any Advance?* will be published on September 3 and will cover Europe and the rest of the world. It too includes statements from many of the movements (Lettrism, the Zero Group, Situationism, the Noigandres Group, the international concrete poetry movement) or the individuals (H. C. Artmann, Max Bense, Raoul Hausmann, Isidore Isou, Bruno Munari, Jorgen Nash, Otto Piene, Roger Planchon, Diter Rot) most intimately concerned. Both numbers carry original work by such writers and artists, as well as reviews of the relevant magazines and literature, and major critical articles discussing the implications of the movement.

This is an ambitious theme. The aim is two-fold: to present a cross section of the avant garde today, whether fertile or futile, and to examine "avant garde" as a notion in itself. The term, which is not an old one—it was unknown to the 1888 O.E.D. in any but the military sense—may be due for a transformation. These two numbers, striking a balance between enthusiasm and blank dismissal, could provide not only a useful work of reference but also a new turning-point in the history of ideas.

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cult to know. Many of us will prefer the foothills, where there is less abstraction of this sort and fewer hints of the apocalypse. It is true that our neighbours will be social scientists or even analytical philosophers, but that risk, in our folly, we shall take in our stride.

Clare: The Vanished Man

The Later Poems of John Clare. Edited by ERIC ROBINSON and GEOFFREY SUMMERFIELD. *Manchester University Press*, 37s. 6d.
The Shepherd's Calendar. By JOHN CLARE. Edited by ERIC ROBINSON and GEOFFREY SUMMERFIELD. *Oxford University Press*, 21s.
The Life of John Clare. By FREDERICK MARTIN. With Introduction and Notes by Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield. *Frank Cass*, 35s.

A HUNDRED YEARS after his death, how far is the problem of Clare resolved? For most sophisticated poetry-readers to-day it is hard to imagine how anyone can fail to respond to that element we call genius in his work. Yet generations of textbook writers have found this possible. Elton (1920, reprinted 1948) looks at a swarm of minnows, but mentions Clare not at all. The revised (1964) Legouis & Cazamian still touches him off among

> poets who are of a clearly inferior order, but are saved from oblivion through some individual accent, some occasional flash of personality; as, for example, the peasant poet John Clare, in whom a remarkably spontaneous feeling for nature creates for itself a form that is unfortunately less fresh.

Extraordinary? Yet why has any academic approval taken so long to find a voice? Why has the Oxford University Press not included him up to now in its canon of poets? (Admittedly, this is being remedied; a massive Collected Clare—edited by the alert new Clare-explorers Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield—is on the way: but this is at some years' distance.) And is it not significant that the most-used anthology piece should be the impressive but untypical *I Am*?

There are practical answers to most of these questions. When Clare (1793–1864) made his name in the early 1820s, it was as an oddity, a peasant who wrote verses. The mass of his later and greater work (except for one slow-selling volume in 1836) was never published in his lifetime—nor indeed for years after that. Much is unprinted still. Clare is in fact the vanished man of 19th-century poetry. Long before he entered the Epping asylum in 1837, he had slipped out of the public mind; and in the years that followed, few people even knew that he was alive. But he was, and actively writing (as we see it now) some of the most original lyrical poetry of his time.

A further obstacle is the nature of the manuscripts themselves. The sheer quantity, for one thing, is enormous. The transcripts made by W. F. Knight, the kindly Steward of the Northampton Asylum where Clare spent the final third of his life, number nearly 900—and this for a few years alone. Poems are written in the mad disguise of Byron or of Burns, yet they are often major Clare underneath. Lines and images are repeated from poem to poem. In verses of marvellous beauty, streaks of unmistakable lunacy are lodged. (The outstanding examples are in that most remarkable of poems, Clare's *Child Harold*.) And anyhow, looking at some striking Blake-like image, where do you draw the line between deliberate effort and frenzied accident? And should an editor resist the temptation to tidy Clare's spelling, punctuation, and grammar? Good selections of Clare exist, of course: notably Blunden's careful pioneer book of 1920, Grigson's, Reeves', and above all the two-volume Tibble collection, the largest so far available. (A revised edition of this will be published by Dent in the autumn.) Not one of these gives us Clare entirely in the rough—for what the matter is worth.

It is worth a good deal to his latest editors, Robinson and Summerfield. The centenary year has brought them into the open, ready to face all the problems touched on above, and with three publications as a preliminary token of what is to come: a new edition of Clare's early *Shepherd's Calendar*; another of Frederick Martin's 1865 biography of the poet; and a volume selected from later manuscripts.

IT IS CURIOUS that Clare's story hasn't attracted more biographical attention. As one of those inexplicable case-histories of genius, it has very few rivals. A Northampton labourer's son, the youthful Clare scribbled verses passionately as soon as he could write. After enormous difficulties, a volume of his poetry was published in 1820; it sold extraordinarily well. (Keats' main work, published at the same time by the same publisher, hardly sold at all.) Clare came to London in a new green coat, had a riotous few weeks with Hazlitt, Lamb, and others of the writing crowd—and this was the beginning and end of his luck. He remained a farm labourer by trade; there were not a few lettered men in humble positions in the still-feudal countryside—butlers or gardeners who were expert in some field of science or natural history: Clare corresponded with two such homespun scholars.

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Poverty, frustration, and a complexity of allied problems finally destroyed Clare's mental balance, and the last twenty-seven years of his life were spent in asylum keeping, first at Epping, then at Northampton. As we know, both institutions were run by unusually enlightened men, and Clare was encouraged to write. Nature, love, and his own identity—these remain his rich particular fields. But the most haunting theme which estrangement brought to the surface was his visionary love for a girl called Mary Joyce. She had been a childhood companion, then both had taken different paths. As a farmer's daughter, she was socially above the young Clare's level in courting days. But now she appeared to him as the spirit of all loss and all desire: the spiritual wife, perhaps, by contrast to poor Patty Clare and their many children.

It is an interesting signpost to current taste that the first revival by Robinson and Summerfield is a work of Clare's untroubled peasant days. Non-romantics of the younger school, determinedly not beguiled by chance felicities, these editors perceive—even in the asylum Clare—the rooted 18th-century poet-observer of the lesser known early books. New readers of *The Shepherd's Calendar* ("the truest poem of English country life ever written," the editors call it) may very well share this admiration. But the interest of the present beautiful little edition, with its woodcut pictures, goes further than that of a quaint rustic nostalgia. The poem is the longest sustained work of Clare's hopeful younger days. A month-by-month description of the changing village year, it was commissioned by Clare's publisher, Taylor, in 1823, and was written (mostly in vigorous iambic couplets) with the rapid excitement that generally marked the poet's inventive sessions. ("The Muse," he observed, "is a fickle Hussey who sometimes stilts me up to madness and then leaves me as a beggar by the wayside with no more life than what's mortal.") But nearly four years were to pass before the book appeared. By then, Clare's popular moment was over; few copies were sold. A characteristic delaying-situation in his story.

What concerns us, now, however, is that the original published version was considerably cut (by over 1,600 lines) and in other ways corrected by Taylor's anxious hand. The present editors have given themselves the agreeable task of restoring the excised lines, provincial words, realistic images (such as fairies crowding in cupboards "as thick as mites in rotten cheese"), the mildly radical philosophising, and other such immodesties. Clare's own dry comments on all this tampering should promptly dispel

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HAMISH HAMILTON

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any idea that he lacked critical acumen, or (until the late asylum years) wrote without very deliberate care. He knew his style.

The handsome edition of Frederick Martin's Clare—the second edition after a century—is an enterprising piece of publishing. In fact, this long-submerged biography holds much the same place in relation to the poet as Mrs. Gaskell's biography of a few years earlier does to Charlotte Brontë. (Could the one have prompted the other?) Each was written almost immediately after the death of its subject; each shows personal observation of the scene and people; each has a kind of passionate recklessness, not at all typical of its time. And it is fair to say of Martin's book that between its appearance and the publication of the standard Clare biography by J. and A. Tibble (revised in 1956), not many salient facts have been added to the tale.

Near judgment, of course, isn't necessarily good judgment. There are errors, omissions, false emphases, over-simplifications. A purist taste may boggle too at the manner: one all too familiar even now in certain popular biographies.

> John set off in a sharp trot, skipping over the seven or eight miles to Stamford in little more than an hour.... At last there was noise inside the house, a rattling of keys and drawing of bolts. The bookseller slowly opened his door, and was immensely astonished to see a little country lad, thin and haggard, with wild gleaming eyes, rush at him with a demand for Thomson's "Seasons." Was there ever such a customer seen at Stamford? The good bookseller was not accustomed to excitement, for the old ladies who dealt at his shop bought their hymn-books and manuals of devotion without any manifestations of impatience, and even the young ones, though they asked for Aphra Behn's novels in a whisper, came in very quietly and demurely. Who, then, was this . . . (*etc.*)?

Still, the editors of the stylish new edition of Martin take care to point out and correct the inaccuracies; they also give, for extra measure, Clare's account of Byron's funeral and his memorable *Journey from Essex* (the escape-walk from Epping to his home) in exact transcription. Finally, they reproduce most of the known Clare portraits, including his death mask and a photograph (new to me) taken in 1864, a few months before he died. The death mask, as it happens, shows features not unlike those of Mr. Yehudi Menuhin. Clare's fine and pensive face always looks well as the frontispiece to a volume of poems; even in the remarkable Grimshaw portrait of 1844, which shows him as both stout and mad, the face is still a sharply defined and sensitive one.

A curious sideline of speculation touches Martin himself: how did this German-born Jew come to be writing about a forgotten provincial poet in a non-biographical time? The editors offer a clue: that Martin had applied for British citizenship in 1864, and that his sponsor was Joseph Whitaker, the publisher, in 1836, of Clare's ill-fated book *The Rural Muse*. The friendship might have been a cause of Martin's book; it might have been an effect. "Perhaps, in Victorian England," the editors remark, "with its taboos about sex and drink and mental disease, it took a little exiled German Jew to take Clare seriously as a poetic genius." Clare-fanciers will find much to interest them in this volume.

THE THIRD of the new publications, *The Later Poems of John Clare*, is a selection chiefly from unpublished or unfamiliar verses of the asylum years. The most important contents, though, are the two long poems *Child Harold* and *Don Juan* in full, set out—by the present editors' conjecture—as Clare composed them, with all the interposed songs and other material. To read these two strange works is to travel through the whole landscape, coarse or marvellous, of Clare's mind: every factor in his life—Mary, the past, the madhouse present, love and marriage, reading, solitude, nature, desire—can somewhere be met in their verses. The omissions among the shorter poems have a touch of idiosyncrasy, perhaps: you will not find, for a start, *I Am*, *It is the Evening Hour, Invite to Eternity*, *Secret Love*, or *A Vision*. Well, if you know Clare you will know these poems. Turn the pages: you are in Clare country, the 18th-century pre-Enclosure village with the girl going away into service, the lark, the ploughboy, the daisied grass: a place of primal innocence and joy—

> *I love the awthorn well*
> *The first green thing*
> *In woods and hedges—black thorn dell*
> *Dashed with its first green spring*
> *When sallows shine in golden shene*
> *These white thorn places in the black how green.*
>
> *How beautifully green*
> *Though March has just begun*
> *To tend primeroses planted in the suns*
> *The roots that further in*
> *Are not begun to bud or maybe just begun.*

But even this Eden is not to be counted on. Summer . . . the earth cracks; the sun boils; poppies and cornflowers burn their way through the weeds. Out of confusion or despair comes a curious Elizabethan image:

> *Infants are but cradles for the grave*
> *And death the nurse as soon as life begins*
> *Time keeps accounts books for him and they save*
> *Expences for his funeral out of sins*
> *The stone is not put down—but when death wins*
> *Churchyards are chronicles were all sleep well*

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The gravestones there as afterlives live in
So search the Scriptures they will plainly tell
That God made heaven—Man himself the hell.

Of all English poets Clare remains the outstanding recorder of the natural scene—not only of village life but of the meticulous world of grass blade, insect, bird; with a single exception, the one in whose hands the pastoral image most truly ceases to be a cliché or convention, or an echo of some earlier poetic mind. (Remember Keats and Shakespeare's snail, for instance.) The exception is Edward Thomas. But any Thomas poem—*It Rains* is a wonderful example—illustrates how much deeper was his level of sophistication. With Clare (as with Van Gogh) the force of observation alone replaced the image. Yet Clare was no unlettered simpleton. His reading was wide; besides poetry and ballads his library included books on history, botany, philosophy, mathematics. Fiction he read less, usually turning again to his favourites, *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *Tom Jones*. He once wrote shrewdly:

> as to my learning I am not wonderfully deep in science nor so wonderfully ignorant as many may have fancied I puzzled over everything in my hours of leisure with a restless curiosity that was ever on the enquiry & never satisfied . . . & tho I never came off victorious I was never conquered. . . .

In any case, you cannot consider Clare's poetry quite separately from his life—the strands of his story run too strongly through. And in the last phase of his life we encounter one of the most extraordinary features of his history as a poet. Almost alone of the names of the dazzling early 1820s, Clare lived on and continued to write. And yet he completely by-passed the Victorian age. Did the new generation of writers—Dickens, Tennyson, Emily Brontë—know of the still-living Clare? Did Clare know anything of *their* work? The answer in either case appears to be No. Cut off from literary exchange, away from all that was new in poetry and taste, Clare, especially in a few brilliant years of the 1840s, continued to develop on lines of his own. It is not only the experiments with unrhymed verse or unusual stanzas that should interest us, but the general metrical movement which at times seems well beyond that of any poetry in his day.

Spirit of her I love
Whispering to me
Stories of sweet visions as I rove,
Here stop, and crop with me
Sweet flowers that in the still hour grew,
We'll take them home, nor shake off the bright dew.

Mary, or sweet spirit of thee,
As the bright sun shines tomorrow
Thy dark eyes these flowers shall see
Gathered by me in sorrow,
In the still hour when my mind was free
To walk alone—yet wish I walk'd with thee.

His approach to what might be a classic lyrical theme, morever, is never entirely predictable. The poem *Now is Past*, as one example, shows a strangely original treatment of time.

Now *is past—the happy* now
When we together roved
Beneath the wildwood's oak-tree bough
And nature said we loved.
Winter's blast
The now *since then has crept between,*
And left us both apart.
Winters that withered all the green
Have froze the beating heart.
Now *is past. . . .*

Now *is past, is changed agen,*
The woods and fields are painted new.
Wild strawberries which both gathered then
None know now where they grew.
The sky's o'ercast.
Wood strawberries faded from wood-sides,
Green leaves have all turned yellow;
No Adelaide walks the wood-rides,
True love has no bed-fellow.
Now *is past.*

Readers who travel through Clare's poetry and prose will not under-rate the mind beneath the apparent simplicities. Clare's voice, with its unique and individual ring, crosses the century: strikes directly into our time and taste. As this latest selection shows (it contains neither of the last two quoted poems), we need not look only at his sudden high peaks of lyrical achievement to hear it.

Naomi Lewis

Novels

Chaos and Night. By Henry de Montherlant. Translated by Terence Kilmartin, with an introduction by Peter Quennell. *Weidenfeld and Nicolson*, 25s.
The Ice Saints. By Frank Tuohy. *Macmillan*, 21s.
The Garrick Year. By Margaret Drabble. *Weidenfeld and Nicolson*, 18s.
Clipped Wings. By Philip Callow. *Times Press* and *Anthony Gibbs & Phillips*, 18s.

"The determinism of the naturalistic novel," wrote Sartre in *What is Literature?*, "crushed out life and replaced human actions by one-way mechanisms. It had virtually but one subject: the slow disintegration of a man, an enterprise, a family or a society. It was necessary to return to zero."

Montherlant's new novel fits this description of the 19th-century novel rather neatly—not

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surprisingly, when you consider how much he himself has always been inspired by destruction. "It is not possible," he once wrote, "to gain much hold over a man whose ideal is death in life—or at least to be dead to the world, since such a death is, in fact, the true life." This soldier-monk and hedonist-anchorite of literature, as determined as St. Brendan not to let anyone (especially any woman) get a hold over him—it is natural that, having distanced humanity, people should become human for him only when they are mad, solitary, or otherwise ripe for destruction. Celestino, the hero of *Chaos and Night*, is in this condition, a doomed solitary like Coantré in *Les Célibataires*. He is an exiled veteran of the Spanish Civil War, an anarchist (and in his youth an amateur bull-fighter), and his lifelong simple faith in the efficacy of killing is beginning to be clouded by the thought that he himself has to die. He lives with his daughter in Paris like a guerilla in enemy territory, spending his days reading the Civil War into the day's news and writing unpublishable articles. On principle, he has in twenty years made no French friends whatever, and his favourite recreation is "car-fighting", *i.e.* bull-fighting with French motor-cars on pedestrian crossings. His nighttime dreams are of arrest by Franco's police—

> Celestino, as he slept, had placed his hand on a moulding in the wall which ran alongside his bed, pressing it so hard in the passion of his sleep that a blister had formed on one of his fingers. It was a habit of his to cling to this moulding in his sleep, as though he were clinging to the bar of a prison window.

The moment of truth comes to this ancient bull-fighter and Quixote, to whom senility is now playing the matador, when a telegram summons him to Madrid to collect a legacy. Though his theoretical courage is still absolute, his physical courage has been destroyed by solitude and senility. He is already half dead with fear before he crosses the frontier, and on reaching Madrid the effort of confronting his imaginary Spain with the real one is too much for him and his mind breaks down. He watches his last bull-fight (the final disillusionment: even bull-fighting now appears to him a monstrous piece of charlatanry, the incarnation of "bad faith") and rushes home to die a bull's death in his hotel bedroom.

It is obviously a book which Montherlant has meditated and sifted and worked over for a long time, and the result of the process has been almost all profit. He tells us that the point of the book changed during the writing; but the conception, when he finally got it right, was marvellously rich. All the various themes in the

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Selected Poems

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book—Quixote, the bull-fight, senility, the bloodless bloodthirstiness of café politics—are contained in it and work together naturally and organically. The 19th-century manner, with its telling diagnostic details (like Celestino's blister) isolated for our admiration, its epigrams ("October, not August, is the month of departure; it is in October that our servants and our mistresses leave us"), and its pages of set eloquence, like the superb serio-comic set-piece of Celestino's last bull-fight ("The nags, all pitted and lacerated by the bull's horns, covered with congealed blood, and wrapped in their patched quilts that might have covered the beds in some sordid hotel. . . .") is on the whole perfectly adjusted to the matter. There is a lot of emphasis on the "doing," of course, and here and there a bit of exhibitionism and coat-trailing. Montherlant makes a big point in his foreword of Celestino's not being himself (and, rather confusingly, brings himself into the picture as a shadowy narrator, nearing death like Celestino, and not sure if he will live to finish the story) but occasionally the barrier breaks down. When Celestino has one of his daily hates against the Parisians, the venom is really not his but Montherlant's, that rather nasty streak in Montherlant, with his vicious jokes against the "technicians" (*i.e.* upstart working-class) whom he sees as ruining French society. And a further odd and related feature of the novel is an occasional supernatural or at least contra-natural incident. These incidents are not just Celestino's hallucination, for when his dead body is found it exhibits four real sword-holes made by a non-existent matador. I'm not sure how to take this. I suspect the two or three earlier incidents (not much more than jokes) were planted to justify the last and important one, a piece of high-handedness this novel is quite strong enough to carry.

LOOK AT THE texture of any page of *The Ice Saints* and you see why one can discuss Frank Tuohy in the same breath as Montherlant. It shows a mind at a steady temperature of creation, almost embarrassed at the number of perceptions and possibilities opening up before it. It is odd to find so much life in a novel written squarely to a prescription. Tuohy sets out to report on Gomulka's Poland, wanting to remind us that the liberalisation hasn't made any essential change; and he decides to do it in terms of (vaguely Jamesian) social comedy. A young, intelligent, liberal-minded English girl comes (with news of a legacy) to visit her married sister in Poland. The Poles draw her into their manoeuvres and quarrels but are not really interested in her interest in them; they are, gloomily, even luxuriously, convinced that no Westerner can understand. Rose's scrupulous diplomacy produces disasters, her open mind changes into irrational love for the place alternating with irrational hatred, and her mission ends in panic flight. Tuohy makes the sister's crowded flat, jammed like all Polish flats with surplus furniture and put-up beds, provide a sort of model for the whole narrative.

> There was still the discomfort of being accommodating instead of helpful, the slight ache of always feeling one is in the wrong chair, the hurry of shifting from room to room with the risk of leaving a pair of nylons, a half-finished detective story or a packet of cigarettes stranded, while the money-making activities of the house went on.

In a flat like this, and a situation like that of Rose's embassy, it is impossible either to stay still or to move without unpredictable repercussions. You can't do this, because of that, the consequence of this other thing. Tuohy's strengths are, first, this command of causality: his narrative is an immensely swift succession of little billiard-ball collisions; and secondly his talent for Jamesian stage-directions, for instance in the scene in which Rose questions her brother-in-law Witek about Poland. Witek, a slightly pathetic, heavy-in-hand, second-rate academic, who has become a Party member out of a mixture of conviction and inefficient opportunism, is made nervous by her questionnaire:

> He was perplexed by their whole conversation: half-scared and half flattered, like a hired guide whom lady tourists suddenly ask a lot of personal questions.

ONE OF Montherlant's anti-feminist jibes has its bearing on *The Garrick Year*. "Every woman who wants to have a child, 'to give some meaning to her life,' shows us that she is incapable of finding any meaning by herself. She also proves the existence of the vacuum when she seeks 'to give herself a personality'—another common female ambition." There is not much to the action of this novel, a sexual foursome (successful young television actor, smart wife who wants to be a television announcer, famous producer, false ingénue actress) played out at a provincial drama festival. The interest (and the novel has some interest) lies in the wife's efforts to define a character for herself. She hasn't much material to hand—a *penchant* for factual precision, a taste for Victorian hats and Liverpool teapots, a gift for staring people down at parties. It is all pretty thin, and though the author does some defining on her own account, the novel is a bit thin too. The texture is not loose, indeed the author has a taste for precision, but it is flimsy, as any texture must

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be when there aren't enough threads. It's a novel with the opposite weakness to Philip Callow's. It is objective as far as it is able to be, which is not very far, as there is not much to be objective about; whereas the fatal flaw in Callow's novel is the failure to be objective. He means to write one of those proletarian novels of spiritual progress (with hints from *Sons and Lovers* and *Hurry On Down*) but hasn't quite coped with the problem of *seeing* his hero, of presenting him as an understood phenomenon. The opening lines are more of a confession of weakness than they are meant to be:

> I was going to write this in the third person, like a real professional—but not now. I've changed my mind. It seems to me that as soon as you leave out your own shortcomings you start to go wrong, get too big for your boots, superior, poetic, and so forth. Besides, who can be really detached and objective about other people?

If you can't be objective about other people it's unlikely you will be able to be so about yourself.

Callow is a distinctly good poet, and it is interesting to see how much he is still fumbling in fiction. Opting for first-person narration is not much help to him; it is merely an excuse for turning whole chunks of narrative into chant. The set, monotonous, all-purpose prose-rhythm has no cumulative effect; it is more a way of avoiding having to construct and dramatise. And when he does have to attempt a piece of dramatisation he is sometimes quite comically stumped by it; for instance in the scene where the hero's girl-friend tells him the story of her friendship with a homosexual. The only way he can think of to differentiate her narration from that of the novel proper is to leave out all the verbs. It's worth being brutal about this novel, because Callow has something to say in fiction, and with any luck will find out how to say it.

P. N. Furbank

Imperialism Ideologised

After Imperialism. By Michael Barratt Brown. *Heinemann.* £3 3s.

Mr. Brown's argument concludes with a plea for enlightened self-interest. He wants the richer, more advanced nations—and Britain in particular—to promote the poorer countries of the so-called Third World. He wants them to do this, not by way of compensation or penance (though he paints vividly the harm caused to many of these countries by decades of colonial rule); nor as a political precaution against the rage of poverty and "relative deprivation"; but rather as an act of good business. Only in this way, he argues, can the ever-larger productive capacity of the capitalist world find the growing markets and sources of supply needed to insure the prosperity of all.

The proposal, put in this bare form, is unexceptionable: who of good will is opposed to raising the poor and building a world of equals? But Mr. Brown's programme has certain corollaries: first, that Britain should not allow herself to be diverted from this larger vision by the meretricious allurements of the Common Market; second, that she must reconcile herself to the necessity of centralised planning in these newly developing economies (no other system will work); third, that much if not most of the task of the advanced economies can and will be undertaken only by state enterprise ("bribing" of private enterprise will not do the job).

In support of this manifesto, Mr. Brown adduces a remarkable gallimaufry of history, fiction, good and bad economics, and statements of faith paraded as statements of fact. His first assumption is that socialism works better than capitalism, not only in industry but in agriculture—witness, says Brown (pp. 426–27), the success of Russian and Chinese collectivisation! Individual peasants, he notes, will not yield any increase in crops to the market place; they will simply eat better. But collectivisation will squeeze it out of them. To be sure, one must avoid "communist ruthlessness"; but then "it is beside the point to be sentimental about the peasant with his five acres and a cow." Mr. Brown cites the Hammonds on "the trauma" of the 18th-century British enclosures—"as terrible as any great change in the whole of our national history." But he can write of the 20th century Chinese peasant: "The Chinese communists... persuaded him [sic] to farm co-operatively and finally brought him into the communes."

Mr. Brown's second assumption is his conviction that the present division of the world between "have" and "have-not" countries is an artificial consequence of colonial distortion and exploitation; and that there is no intrinsic reason why the presently underdeveloped countries should not eventually attain the same level of industrial capacity and wealth as their precursors. For the first part of this incomplete syllogism, Mr. Brown offers a great deal of historical evidence; probably the best chapter in the book is the one on "Results of Empire—in the Colonies." He tries too hard, however, to prove his case, minimising or omitting the positive side of colonialism—the establishment of order, the investment in social overhead capital, the gift of a common language in areas divided by profound ethnic enmities, the training, however modest, of administrative cadres and an educated élite. It is no coincidence

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that two of the poorest countries on the African continent are Ethiopia, the bulk of whose capital plant still dates from the period of Italian occupation, and Liberia, which had all the disadvantages of informal imperialism and none of the advantages of formal annexation. Karl Marx himself had a more balanced view when he looked into the future and wrote in 1853: "England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia." And looking backward, Herbert Luethy (in an essay on "Colonisation" in the *Journal of Economic History*) echoes the same judgment:

> Europe's colonisation of the world, as well as all the partial colonisations which preceded it, was neither a chain of crimes nor a chain of beneficence: it was the painful birth of the modern world itself. None of the former colonial peoples remember it with gratitude, for it was alien rule; but none of them wish to turn back the clock, and this is its historical justification....

YET EVEN IF Brown's bill of particulars constituted the whole truth, it would still not demonstrate that without Western imperialism, the presently underdeveloped countries of the world would have effected their own industrial revolutions. He argues that these are countries "rich in natural resources" (all of them? the right resources? easy and cheap to exploit?)—but resources by themselves never made an industrial revolution. And even in the West, there are poorer and richer countries and regions. Admittedly the wheel of fortune turns, and what has long been a less industrial area may some day pass those that once were ahead: *viz*, the economic growth of southern England and the decline of the North. But the assumption that Nature has somehow been equal in her favours and that all areas have equal potentials for growth is not only not susceptible of empirical proof but is most unlikely on the face of it.

The empirical evidence, of course, seems to show that even after independence the ex-colonial nations are losing ground to the industrial economies of the West. Their explanation for this disturbing development would rest largely on accusations of "neo-colonialism," and Brown takes substantially the same position. He sees the present relationship of the ex-imperial powers to their former colonies as a kind of conspiracy to maintain them in subordination. Does anyone propose admitting the poorer countries into European customs unions? This will just milk them of their resources while preventing them from developing their own industry. Does anyone propose excluding them? This will rob them of indispensable markets. Are European investors ready to see home industries grow in these new countries? No, for these would compete for labour with mines and plantations. But what of the increased investment by Europeans in manufacturing plant? It's the wrong kind of plant—light industry turning out consumers' goods, rather than heavy industry; and everyone knows that full economic development is possible only on a heavy industrial base.[1] Besides, Brown continues, even if heavy industry were introduced from abroad, it would only destroy local firms and retard local enterprise, to say nothing of its perpetuation of outside political control. In this regard, he is, for all his emphasis on heavy plant, particularly solicitous of rural and domestic handicrafts, in which he sees "the whole basis... of future industrial development."

IN SUM, the advanced countries are damned if they do and damned if they don't. Their motives are suspect *a priori*; their behaviour reprehensible. The United States paid more than the market price for Cuban sugar? This was to protect American growers. (Wouldn't a tariff have done the job, and cost a lot less?) Great Britain favoured free trade in the nineteenth century? It was a device to take advantage of her industrial superiority. The same fact of economic hegemony will explain America's post-war concern for easier international exchange. That is why the principles of free trade "have entered into United States ideology"; they are necessarily "the ideology of the predominant capitalist power." But isn't the United States in fact protectionist? Apparently a case of blind selfishness. In general, Brown states, all the capitalist nations of the world stick together under the leadership of the U.S.A. to perpetuate their exploitation of the poorer nations; the cold war "is concerned with the overall capitalist position, the whole way of life of what is called 'the free world'." A troubled reader may question the existence of this allegedly unitary capitalist position and ask, for example, about the Suez affair of 1956. Brown's solution is simple: Britain and France yielded to higher necessity; occasionally "specific imperial positions may well be abandoned in the general interest." One wonders what he would make of the latest vicissitudes of the Common Market and the unilateral initiatives of M. de Gaulle.

[1] This is one of the dogmas of "scientific" socialism. I have never seen either a theoretical or empirical proof of this proposition, and the example of countries like Denmark, New Zealand, or even Switzerland contradicts it.

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In any event, the implication seems to be that the international co-operation of Western nations rests on common business interests which transcend national concerns. I say "implication" because Mr. Brown is not explicit on this point, and his analyses are sometimes inconsistent. Take the Coal & Steel Community. Mr. Brown alleges that the French promoted this arrangement in order to restrain the great German "monopolies" and get cheap coal for their own steel industry. Yet on the same page, he speaks of the interlocking ownership of Franco-German coal and steel combines and their "desire for unity... across the national frontiers." The equivocation is untenable, and anyway the facts are inaccurate: the leading French steel producers (including the Wendels and the other Lorraine giants) were bitterly opposed to the formation of the Coal-Steel Pool.

If Mr. Brown is generally unfriendly in his interpretation of the motives of such countries as capitalist Britain and America, he is far more favourable in his assessment of the policies of "ruthless" communist régimes. The failure of East European countries to join the Marshall Plan was all the fault of the U.S.: "Mr. Molotov seemed at first genuinely prepared to co-operate, although not to the extent of permitting what he regarded as American interference in the Soviet economy." Capitalist countries send technicians to developing lands with ulterior motives of exploitation and domination; not the Russians. "The Russians trained Chinese technicians to take over from them at every level and, when they had got the plants running, went back home. In this way the Chinese had the best of both worlds—the full range of experience of Russian enterprises and the plants in their full ownership at the end." (The Japanese succeeded in doing this, as had the French and Germans before them, dealing with their own capitalist precursors on the path of industrialisation. But one wonders if the Chinese are as satisfied as Mr. Brown.)

This is a partisan work trapped out with a scholarly apparatus of footnotes and tables that may convey to some a tone of objectivity. Yet the footnotes are often incomplete; the references are sometimes untraceable or traceable only with difficulty; the sources are often of questionable authority or reliability; and the tone of objectivity is nothing more than a strong scepticism towards adverse evidence and opinion.

The effect of this superficial objectivity may be heightened for some by the assurance of the author. Mr. Brown is an ideologist; and like most ideologists, he knows all the answers. Those who are still trying to learn more about the complex course of European economic and political development will marvel at the way he disposes of the thorniest historical problems with an *ex-cathedra* sentence or two. The first chapter in particular is a veritable compendium of dicta, not always consistent with one another or with the assumptions of the rest of the book.

Why, asks Mr. Brown, did Europeans colonise the rest of the world and not they us? The question is the more intriguing because, as he notes, the societies of Asia especially were far richer and more populous than those of the West. The answer, he says, lies in the industrialisation of Europe, itself the consequence of "the emergence of a merchant-manufacturing class as the dominant element in society." Why such a class in Europe and not in Asia? Essentially because the state was too centralised and powerful in the East (though capable of little resistance to Western pressure), so that autonomous private enterprise never had a chance to flourish. Why was the state more centralised in the East? Mr. Brown offers by way of explanation a *pot-pourri* of Wittfogel's thesis of the hydraulic society, the conditions of land tenure (in India the nobility were not independent landed proprietors, but drew their income from the state),[2] the absorption of Chinese merchants into the ruling bureaucracy, and the (peculiar?) necessity of "a strong central power... to preserve peace from invasion."

The mixture is seasoned with a variety of lesser assertions—some dubious ("neither the king nor the barons were ever quite so powerful or rich in England as in France"); some devoid of real content (what does it mean to say that "Indian metallurgy anticipated European developments by several centuries, not only in copper and in brass but in high-grade steels"?); some apparently contradictory (the conquest of Bengal "meant the absolute impoverishment and devastation of a once flourishing Indian state," yet "at the end of the eighteenth century ... competition from Indian textiles [was] more than ever insufferable" and "exports *from* India were valued at well over £6 million a year)."

Much of this is provocative, if nothing else; it certainly does not constitute a persuasive analysis. The thing that jars most in Mr. Brown's historical discussions is a placid confidence far beyond that warranted by his knowledge or ours. As Swift wrote, "The most positive men are the most credulous."

David S. Landes

[2] Students of Japanese history are inclined to view the analogous separation of the *samurai* from the land as an important advantage in the transition from a "feudal" to a modern society.

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Trial of a Young Poet

The Case of Josef Brodsky

Ukase

4 May, 1961

ON THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST PERSONS AVOIDING WORK FOR THE COMMON GOOD AND LEADING AN ANTI-SOCIAL PARASITIC LIFE.

It is ordered that adult citizens able to work who will not fulfil the most important duty laid down by the Constitution, namely to work honestly according to their abilities, who avoid work for the common good, who profit from gains not arising out of work, from the exploitation of land, automobile vehicles, living-accommodation, or who commit other anti-social acts that enable them to lead parasitic lives, in accordance with the decision of the People's Court of the City District are liable to deportation to places specially selected for the purpose for a period of two to five years and to forced labour in the place of their penal settlement, together with simultaneous seizure of their property not acquired by work.

N. ORGANOV, *President of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the R.S.F.S.R.*

S. ORLOV, *Secretary of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the R.S.F.S.R.*

Session of the Court of the Dzerzhinsky District of the City of Leningrad

First hearing of the case against Josef Brodsky on February 18th, 1964

***Presiding Judge:** Mrs. Savelya.*

JUDGE: What is your occupation?

BRODSKY: I write poems. I translate. I suppose....

JUDGE: Never mind what you "suppose." Stand properly. Don't lean against the wall. Look at the Court. Answer the Court properly. Have you a regular job?

BRODSKY: I thought that was a regular job.

JUDGE: Give a clear answer.

BRODSKY: I wrote poems. I thought they would be printed. I suppose....

JUDGE: We're not interested in what you "suppose." Answer why you didn't work.

BRODSKY: I did work. I wrote poems.

JUDGE: That doesn't interest us. We're interested in what institution you were in touch with.

BRODSKY: I had contracts with a publishing house.

JUDGE: Then answer. Did you have enough contracts to live on? Give us a list of them with the dates and the sums they were for.

BRODSKY: I can't remember exactly. All the contracts are with my lawyer.

JUDGE: I'm asking you.

BRODSKY: Two books containing my translations have been published in Moscow. (*Enumerates them.*)

JUDGE: How long have you been working?

BRODSKY: Roughly....

JUDGE: We're not interested in "roughly."

BRODSKY: Five years.

JUDGE: Where did you work?

BRODSKY: In a factory, on geological expeditions....

JUDGE: How long did you work in the factory?

BRODSKY: One year.

JUDGE: What as?

BRODSKY: As a milling-machinist.

JUDGE: And what is your real trade?

BRODSKY: I'm a poet. And a translator of poetry.

JUDGE: Who has recognised you as a poet? Who has given you a place among the poets?

BRODSKY: No one. And who gave me a place among the human race?

JUDGE: Did you learn that?

BRODSKY: What?

JUDGE: To be a poet. You didn't attempt to go to a university, where people are trained... where they're taught?...

JOSEF BRODSKY, *the 24-year-old Russian poet and translator, who was condemned earlier this year in Leningrad to a five-year sentence of forced labour, has now been pardoned and released. We have this information from the Swiss playwright Friedrich Dürrenmatt who has just returned from Moscow (where he had been invited to attend two premières of his plays). According to Dürrenmatt, the mounting pressure—there were protests from leading Soviet writers and artists, including Anna Akhmatova, Dmitri Shostakovich, Samuel Marshak, Konstantin Paustovsky, among others (Victor Zorza reported this in the* Guardian *of May 13th)—has proved successful. Since his trial Brodsky had been working as a dung carrier on a State farm near Archangel. The text which we publish was brought out by a European journalist and is an almost complete "protocol" of the two-day legal proceedings in February and March of this year.*

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BRODSKY: I didn't think... I didn't think that could be done by training.

JUDGE: What by, then?

BRODSKY: I thought that... by God....

JUDGE: Have you a request to make of the Court?

BRODSKY: I should like to know why I've been arrested.

JUDGE: That is a question, not a request.

BRODSKY: Then I have no request to make.

JUDGE: Has the defence any questions to ask?

DEFENCE COUNSEL: Yes. Citizen Brodsky, do you give what you earn to your family?

BRODSKY: Yes.

DEFENCE COUNSEL: Have you been under treatment in an institution?

BRODSKY: Yes. From the end of December 1963 to January 5th this year in the Kashchenko Hospital in Moscow.

DEFENCE COUNSEL: Don't you think that your illness prevented you from working for long in one place?

BRODSKY: Maybe. Probably. I don't really know.

DEFENCE COUNSEL: You have translated poems for an anthology of Cuban poets?

BRODSKY: Yes.

DEFENCE COUNSEL: I ask the Court to add to the papers of the case the expert opinion of the office of the Translators' Section. A list of the translated poems. Copies of the contracts. And I ask for Citizen Brodsky to be medically examined to ascertain whether his state of health has prevented him from doing regular work. Furthermore, I ask for Citizen Brodsky to be immediately released. I am of the opinion that he has committed no crime and that his arrest is illegal. He has a permanent place of residence and can appear before the Court at any time.

The Court retires for consultation and then reads out the following decision:

To be sent for a Court psychiatrist's report on the question: Is Brodsky suffering from some psychological illness and does this make it impossible to send Brodsky to forced labour in a remote area? To pass the papers of the case to the Militia to check Brodsky's employment contracts....

JUDGE: Have you any questions?

BRODSKY: I have a request. To be given pen and paper in my cell.

JUDGE: This request must be addressed to the chief of the Militia.

BRODSKY: I asked him and he refused. I ask for pen and paper.

JUDGE: I shall pass your request on.

BRODSKY: Thank you.

(*A large crowd has gathered outside the Court, mostly young people*)

JUDGE: What a lot of people! I didn't think so many people would come.

VOICE: It isn't every day a poet comes before the Court.

SECOND *hearing of the case against Josef Brodsky (Fontanka 22, hall of the Building Workers' Club, on March 13th, 1964). Announcement:*

"LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THE WORK-SHY ELEMENT BRODSKY"

The psychiatric report reads: "Psychopathic character traits observable, but capable of working. Hence measures of an administrative character may be taken."

The Judge asks Brodsky what requests he has to make to the Court. It emerges that he has not yet seen a copy of the indictment. The hearing is adjourned, and he is taken out so that he can read the indictment. On being brought in again, he declares that several of the poems are not by him. Furthermore, he requests that the journal which he wrote in 1956, when he was sixteen, should not be included among the documents of the case. The journal is not removed. The Judge asks him why he has changed his place of work thirteen times since 1956, and at intervals in between has not worked.

SOROKIN (*Public Prosecutor*): Is it possible to live on the money you earn?

BRODSKY: It is possible. Since I have been in prison I have signed a statement every day to say that 40 kopecks have been spent on me. And I have earned more than 40 kopecks a day.

SOROKIN: Don't you need shoes and suits?

BRODSKY: I have a suit, an old one, but a suit of sorts. I don't need a second.

DEFENCE COUNSEL: Have experts expressed approval of your poems?

BRODSKY: Yes, I've been printed in the almanac *For the First Time in the Russian Language* and have given readings of translations from the Polish.

JUDGE (*to the Defence Counsel*): You are supposed to be asking him what useful work he has done, and you ask him about his readings.

COUNSEL: His translations are useful work.

JUDGE: It would be better, Brodsky, if you would explain to the Court why you didn't work during the breaks between jobs.

BRODSKY: I wrote poems. I did work.

JUDGE: But you could have worked at the same time.

BRODSKY: I did work. I wrote poems.

JUDGE: But there are people who work in a factory and write poems. What prevented you from doing that?

BRODSKY: But people aren't all the same. Even

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the colour of their hair, the expression of their faces....

JUDGE: That's not your discovery. Everyone knows that. It would be better if you explained how you assess your share in our forward movement towards Communism.

BRODSKY: The building of Communism—that doesn't only mean standing at the work-bench or ploughing the soil. That also means intellectual work which....

JUDGE: Never mind the high-sounding words. Tell us how you intend to arrange your working activity in future.

BRODSKY: I wanted to write and translate poems. But if that contradicts the general norm, I shall take a fixed job and write poems in spite of it.

JUDGE TYAGLY: In our country everyone works. How were you able to laze about for so long?

BRODSKY: You don't look upon my work as work....

The Judge holds out to him the article in the Vecherniy Leningrad *entitled "A Literary Parasite," which is about Brodsky. Brodsky declares that the author, Lerner, is lying: his age is given wrongly, the poems are not by him, his supposed friends are people he scarcely knew or did not know at all.*

JUDGE: Witness Grudinina.

GRUDININA: I have been in charge of the work of young poets for more than eleven years. For seven years I was a member of the commission for work with young authors. Now I am in charge of the poets of the higher classes in the Pioneer Palace and the circle of young authors in the Svetlana factory. At the request of the publishing house I have compiled and edited four anthologies of young poets, which comprise more than two hundred new names. In this way I have a practical knowledge of the work of almost all the young poets of the city. Brodsky's work as a beginner is known to me on the basis of his poems from the years '59 and '60. These were not finished poems, but they contained clear ideas and images. I didn't include them in the anthologies, but I considered the author to be talented.[1] I didn't meet Brodsky personally until autumn 1963. After the publication of the article "A Literary Parasite" in *Vecherniy Leningrad* I called Brodsky for a discussion, because the young people had besieged me with requests to intervene in the affair of the slandered man. When I asked him what he was occupied with at present, Brodsky replied that he was studying languages and for about a year and a half had been working on a literary translation. I took manuscripts of translations from him in order to study them. As a poetess and literary scholar by training I can confirm that Brodsky's translations are of a high professional quality. Brodsky has a specific talent for the artistic translation of poems such as is not often met with. He gave me a work of 368 lines of verse; moreover, I read 120 lines of poems translated by him and printed in Moscow publications. From personal experience of artistic translation I know that a work of such proportions demands of the author not less than a year and a half of full-time work, to say nothing of the bother connected with the publication of the poems and of the consultations with specialists. As is well known, it is impossible to assess accurately the time required for these troublesome extras. If these translations are valued at even the lowest publisher's rates that I have seen with my own eyes, Brodsky has already earned 350 roubles, and the only question is when everything he has done will be printed in full. Apart from contracts for translations, Brodsky also showed me contracts for work for broadcasting and television, and in these cases the work specified by the contracts has already been done but not yet fully paid for. From conversations with Brodsky and with people who know him, I know that Brodsky lives in a very humble style, goes without clothes and amusements, and spends the greater part of his time at his desk. The money which he receives from his work, he gives to his family.

COUNSEL: In order to produce an artistic trans-

[1] *Ed. Note:* Almost nothing of Brodsky's own verse has been published in Russia, although many poems have been circulating in mimeographed form and have made his reputation. "I first heard his name," the American critic Andrew Field writes, "when the elderly Anna Akhmatova, Russia's greatest living poet, praised his poetry in a conversation on the work of the younger generation, adding 'that might be because he writes like me though'.... As a poet Brodsky does show the strong influence of Akhmatova, and also of the famous Russian poet Osip Mandelstam. His poems are unassertive and deceptively conversational in style; their aim is frequently to convey the strangeness and awkwardness of life in the simplest possible manner...." These are the concluding lines of Brodsky's poem entitled "Monument to Pushkin":

An empty street.
And a monument to a poet.
An empty street.
And the singing of the storm.
And a head
bent down in tiredness.

... On such a night
to toss about in bed
is pleasanter,
than to stand
on pedestals.

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lation of poems, is it necessary to know the author's work at all?

GRUDININA: Yes, for good translations, such as Brodsky's are, one must know the author's work and immerse oneself in his language.

COUNSEL: Is the payment reduced when one works from rough translations?

GRUDININA: Yes. When I translated Hungarian poets after rough translations I received one rouble (in the old money) less per line.

COUNSEL: Is it usual for translators to work with rough translations?

GRUDININA: Yes, quite general. One of the most important Leningrad translators, A. Gitovich, translates from the ancient Chinese on the basis of a rough translation.

JUDGE LEBEDEVA: Can a foreign language be learnt by studying on one's own?

GRUDININA: I have learnt two languages on my own, in addition to those which I learnt at the university.

COUNSEL: If Brodsky does not know the Serbian language, can he nevertheless make a translation of high artistic value?

GRUDININA: Yes, of course.

COUNSEL: But don't you consider working from a rough translation as the reprehensible exploitation of someone else's work?

GRUDININA: Oh, good God? Why?

JUDGE: But why does he work in isolation? Why doesn't he belong to any literary societies?

GRUDININA: In 1958 he asked to join my literary association. But I had heard of him as being a hysterical boy and didn't accept him; I rejected him personally. That was my mistake, and I regret it very much. Now I would very willingly accept him into my association and work with him, if he wants me to.

JUDGE TYAGLY: Have you ever seen how he personally writes poems, if he uses other people's works?

GRUDININA: I haven't seen how Brodsky sits and writes. But nor have I seen Sholokhov sitting at his desk writing. But that doesn't mean that....

JUDGE: It is improper to compare Sholokhov with Brodsky. Haven't you explained to the young people that the State demands that young people shall learn? Brodsky only attended school for seven years.

GRUDININA: The scope of his knowledge is very wide. I was convinced of that when I read his translations.

SOROKIN: Have you read his ugly, pornographic poems?

GRUDININA: No, never.

COUNSEL: One other thing I wanted to ask you, witness.... Brodsky's production for 1963 is as follows: poems in the book *Dawn over Cuba*; translations of poems by Galczynski (of course, not published yet); poems in the book *Yugoslav Poets*; gaucho songs and publications in *Kostyor*. Can that be regarded as serious work?

GRUDININA: Yes, without a doubt. That is a year filled with work. But this work cannot bring in any money for at least a few years. It is wrong to judge the value of a young author's work by the level of the fees he is at present receiving. A young author may fail at first; new time-consuming work may be needed. There is a joke that says: the difference between a work-shy element and a young poet is that the work-shy element doesn't work, but eats—while the young poet works, but doesn't eat.

JUDGE: We object to that statement. In our country everyone receives the appropriate reward for his work, therefore it is impossible for anyone to have done a great deal of work and received little money. You say that in our country where so much sympathy is shown for young poets, you say they go hungry. Why did you say young poets don't eat?

GRUDININA: I didn't put it like that. I pointed out that it is a joke in which there is some truth. The income of young poets is very irregular.

JUDGE: Well, that depends upon them. You don't have to tell us that. All right, you have explained that you were speaking in jest. We accept your explanation.

A NEW *witness is called, Yefim Grigorievich Etkind.*

JUDGE: Give us your pass, since your name is pronounced somehow unclearly. Etkind... Yefim Gershovich.... We are listening to you.

ETKIND (*member of the Association of Soviet Writers, lecturer at the Herzen Institute*): In conformity with the nature of my social and literary work, which is connected with the training of beginner translators, I often have occasion to read or hear translations by young men of letters. About a year ago I had an opportunity of seeing works by Brodsky. They were translations of poems by the outstanding Polish lyric poet Galczynski, few of whose poems have been translated into our language. The clarity of the poetic phraseology, the music of his language, the passion and energy of the poems made a strong impression on me. I was also surprised by the fact that Brodsky had learned the Polish language on his own, without any help from others. He read Galczynski's poems in Polish with the same enthusiasm with which he read the Russian translations. It became clear to me that I was dealing with a man of exceptional gifts and—which is no less important—capacity for hard work and perseverance. I have had many conversations with Brodsky and been surprised by his knowledge in the field of Ameri-

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can, English, and Polish literature. The translation of poems is extraordinarily hard work that demands tenacious diligence, knowledge, and talent. On this path countless failures may await the man of letters, and material benefits are a matter of the distant future. Brodsky must be given the opportunity of working as a translator of poetry. Far from any big city, where there are neither the necessary books nor the literary environment, this is very difficult, if not impossible. With his poetic technique, there would have been nothing to prevent him from working in a slovenly manner; he could have translated hundreds of lines, if he had worked casually. The fact that he earned little money doesn't mean that he wasn't industrious.

JUDGE: But why doesn't he belong to any collective?

ETKIND: He comes to our translators' seminars....

JUDGE: Oh, seminars....

ETKIND: He is a participant in these seminars in the sense....

JUDGE: Suppose there isn't any sense?

(*Laughter in Court*)

JUDGE: When you spoke of Brodsky's knowledge, why did you lay such emphasis on foreign literature? Why didn't you talk about our literature, the literature of our fatherland?

ETKIND: I have talked with him as a translator. Therefore, I was interested in his knowledge in the field of American, English, and Polish literature. It is considerable, many-sided, and not at all superficial.

SMIRNOV (*chief of the "House of Defence," witness for the prosecution*): I am not personally acquainted with Brodsky, but I wish to say that if all citizens had the same attitude as Brodsky towards the accumulation of material values, Communism would not be built for a long time. Intelligence is a dangerous weapon for those who possess it. Everyone has said that he is intelligent and almost a genius. But no one has said what kind of person he is. He grew up in a family belonging to the intelligentsia, but he only had seven years' schooling. Let those present say whether they would like to have a son who only went to elementary school. He didn't go into the army because he was the sole support of his family. But what a support! They say he is a gifted translator, but why doesn't anyone say what muddled ideas he has in his head? And his anti-Soviet verses?

BRODSKY: That's not true.

SMIRNOV: He must change many of his ideas. I doubt the medical report they gave Brodsky concerning his nervous illness in the hospital. Some influential friends must have brought pressure to bear and asked: Save the young man! But he must be cured by forced labour, only by forced labour, and no one will help him, no influential friends. I don't know him personally. I only know about him from the Press. And I know the medical report. I doubt the medical report that freed him from military service. I'm not a doctor, but I doubt it.

BRODSKY: When I was released as the sole support of my family, my father was ill after a heart attack, but I was working and earning money. And then I was ill. How do you come to know me so that you can talk about me like that?

SMIRNOV: I have looked at your personal journal.

BRODSKY: By what right?

JUDGE: I shall not permit that question.

SMIRNOV: I have read poems of his.

COUNSEL: There were poems among the documents that are not by Brodsky. How do you know that the poems you read were really his poems? Because you are speaking of unpublished poems.

SMIRNOV: I know, and that's enough!

JUDGE: Witness Logunov.

LOGUNOV (*deputy director of the Hermitage, economic section*): I am not personally acquainted with Brodsky. I have seen him for the first time here in Court. To live as Brodsky lives is no longer permissible. I shouldn't envy the parents who have such a son. I wish to say that it is necessary to work, to give up all cultural attitudinising. Then the poems Brodsky composed would be real poems. Brodsky must begin his life afresh.

COUNCIL: The witnesses really ought to be talking about facts. But they....

JUDGE: You may express your opinion of the witnesses' statements later.

DENISOV (plumber from UNR-20): I am not personally acquainted with Brodsky. I only know him from the statements published in our Press. I speak as a citizen and a representative of the public. After the statements in the papers I was indignant about Brodsky's work. I wanted to get to know his books. I went to the library —there are no books by him. I asked acquaintances if they knew someone of that name. No, they didn't know him. I'm a worker. In all my life I have only changed my place of work twice. And Brodsky? I'm not satisfied with Brodsky's statement that he has mastered many trades. You can't learn one single trade in such a short time. People say Brodsky is a poet or something. Why wasn't he a member of any association? Doesn't he agree with dialectical materialism? Engels says that work has made man. But Brodsky isn't satisfied with this formulation. He is of a different opinion. Perhaps he is very gifted, but why doesn't he find his way into our literature? Why doesn't he work?

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I would like to state that his activities don't satisfy me as a worker.

JUDGE: Witness Nikolaiev.

NIKOLAIEV (*pensioner*): I am not personally acquainted with Brodsky. I should like to say that I have known for the last three years of the pernicious influence which he exercises on his contemporaries. I am a father and I have been convinced by my own experience of how hard it is to have a son who doesn't work. I have more than once seen poems of Brodsky's in my son's possession. One poem in 42 sections and also individual poems. I know Brodsky from the Umansky case. There is a proverb: "Tell me who your friends are...." I knew Umansky personally. He was a bitter enemy of the Soviet Union. My son also told me that he considers himself a genius. Like Brodsky, he won't work. People like Brodsky and Umansky have a pernicious influence on their contemporaries. I am surprised at Brodsky's parents. They obviously agreed with him. It is evident from the form of the poem that Brodsky can write poems. But these poems have caused nothing but evil. Brodsky isn't only a work-shy element. He is a militant work-shy element. People like Brodsky must be treated ruthlessly. (*Applause.*)

JUDGE TYAGLY: You are of the opinion that Brodsky's poems have influenced your son?

NIKOLAIEV: Yes.

JUDGE: Influenced negatively?

NIKOLAIEV: Yes.

JUDGE: How do you know they are Brodsky's poems?

NIKOLAIEV: There was a folder and on the folder it said: "*Yossif Brodski.*"

COUNSEL: Your son knows Umansky?

NIKOLAIEV: Yes.

COUNSEL: Why do you think it was Brodsky and not Umansky who had a pernicious influence on your son?

NIKOLAIEV: I mean Brodsky and his sort. Brodsky has written shameful and anti-Soviet poems.

BRODSKY: Name my anti-Soviet poems. Repeat one single line.

JUDGE: I shall not permit quotations.

BRODSKY: But I want to know what poems he is talking about. Perhaps they're not by me.

NIKOLAIEV: If I had known I was going to make a statement in Court I should have photostated them and brought them with me.

ROMASHOVA (*teacher of Marxism-Leninism at the Mukhina Educational Institute*): I don't know Brodsky personally. But his so-called activity is known to me. Pushkin said that talent is above all hard work. And Brodsky? Has he by any chance tried, has he worked, to make his poems intelligible to the people? I'm surprised that my colleagues put such a halo round him. Only in the Soviet Union is it possible for a Court to speak so benevolently with a poet, to advise him in such a comradely way to learn. As secretary of the Party organisation of the Mukhina Educational Institute I can say that he has a bad influence on youth.

COUNSEL: Have you ever seen Brodsky?

ROMASHOVA: Never. But Brodsky's so-called activity allows me to form an opinion of him.

COUNSEL: Can you quote any facts?

ROMASHOVA: As an educator of youth I know what young people say about Brodsky's poems.

COUNSEL: And you yourself know Brodsky's poems?

ROMASHOVA: I know them. They're horrible. I consider it impossible to repeat them. They're horrible.

JUDGE: Witness Admoni. If possible, your pass, since the name is unusual.

ADMONI (*Professor at the Herzen Institute, linguist, literary scholar, translator*): When I learnt that Brodsky had been summoned to appear before the Court on a charge of being work-shy I felt it my duty to state my own opinion before the Court. I believe I am justified in doing so because I have been working with young people for thirty years as a university teacher, and because I have long been occupied with translations. I scarcely know Josef Brodsky. We say good morning to each other, but I doubt whether we have exchanged more than a couple of sentences. For over a year, however, I have been following his work as a translator with great attention—on the basis of his appearances at the translators' evenings and on the basis of publications. And on the basis of these translations of Galczynski, Fernandez, and others I can say with complete responsibility that they demanded exceptionally hard work from their author. They bear witness to great skill and culture on the part of the translator. But there are no miracles. Neither skill nor culture come by themselves. When I learnt to-day—for the first time—that he had only had seven years of schooling, it became clear to me that he must have done a truly gigantic amount of work in order to have acquired the skill and culture that he possesses to-day. Mayakovsky's comment on the work of the poet also applies to the translator of poetry: "For the sake of a single word you laboriously shift a thousand tons of ore-bearing rock...." This decree, under which Brodsky has been called to account, is aimed against those who work little, not against those who earn little. Work-shy elements means those who work little. Hence the charge of being work-shy levelled against Brodsky is absurd. It is impossible to accuse a man who works like Brodsky of being work-shy—a man who works

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hard and much, does not think of big earnings, is content with the absolute minimum necessities of life in order to perfect himself in his art and to produce translations of high artistic quality.

JUDGE: What did you say about having to condemn those who earn little?

ADMONI: I said the meaning of the decree is that those who work little should be condemned, not those who earn little.

JUDGE: What do you mean by that? Have you read the decree of May 4th? Communism will only be created by the work of millions.

ADMONI: All work that is useful to society must be respected.

JUDGE TYAGLY: Where has Brodsky read his translations? And in what foreign languages?

ADMONI (*smiling*): He reads in Russian. He translates from the foreign languages into Russian.

JUDGE: When a simple man asks you a question, you should explain to him and not smile.

ADMONI: I have explained that he translates from Serbian and Polish into Russian.

JUDGE: Speak to the Court and not to the public.

ADMONI: I beg to apologise. It's a professorial habit to speak facing the auditorium.

JUDGE: Citizen Brodsky, you have only occasionally worked. Why?

BRODSKY: I have already said that I have worked all the time. In a fixed job and then I wrote poems. That's work—writing poems.

JUDGE: But you've earned very little.

SOROKIN (*Public Prosecutor*): Our great nation is building Communism. In Soviet man an outstanding characteristic is developing: joy in socially useful work. Only the society in which there is no idleness flourishes. Brodsky is far removed from patriotism. He has forgotten the most important principle: he who does not work shall not eat. But Brodsky has been leading the life of a work-shy element for many years. In 1956 he left school and entered a factory. He was fifteen at the time. He was dismissed the same year. (*Repeats the list of his places of employment and declares the breaks between regular employment to have been periods of idleness.*) We have checked and discovered that for one piece of work Brodsky received only 37 roubles, whereas he said he received 150.

BRODSKY: That's an advance. That's only an advance! A part of what I'm to get later.

JUDGE: Silence, Brodsky.

SOROKIN: Where Brodsky worked he shocked everyone by his lack of discipline and dislike of work. The article in *Vecherniy Leningrad* met with great approval. A particularly large number of letters were received from young people. They sharply condemned Brodsky's behaviour. (*Reads letters.*) The young are of the opinion that there is no place for him in Leningrad, that he must be severely punished. He lacks all understanding for conscience and duty. Everyone regards it as a joy to serve in the army. But he dodged it. Brodsky's father sent his son to be examined at the out-patient clinic, and he brought from there a certificate which a credulous military commission accepted. Even before he appeared before the military commissariat he wrote to his friend Shakhmatov: "I am about to keep a date with the Defence Committee, your table will be a reliable refuge for my iambics...." He belonged to the company of those who greeted the word "work" with Satanic laughter and listened with reverence to their "leader" Umansky. Brodsky is allied to him by his hatred of work and of Soviet literature. Pornographic words and ideas enjoy special success here. Shakhmatov was called by Brodsky "Sir." Just like that. Shakhmatov was found guilty. And this is the milieu from which Brodsky has emerged. People talk about Brodsky's talent. But who are these people? People who resemble Brodsky and Shakhmatov. Brodsky is defended by artful dodgers, work-shy elements, woodlice, and beetles. Brodsky isn't a poet, but a man who tries to write puny verses. He has forgotten that in our country man must work, must create values: jobs or bread or poems. We must compel Brodsky to do forced labour. We must banish him from our heroic city. He is a work-shy element, a lout, an artful dodger, a man who is spiritually dirty. Brodsky's admirers spurt venom. But Nekrasov said: you need not be a poet, but you have a duty to be a citizen. We are sitting in judgment to-day not on a poet, but on a work-shy element. Why have people defended a man who hates our fatherland? We must scrutinise the moral countenance of those who have defended him. He wrote in his poems: "I love a foreign homeland." In his journals there is a note: "I have been thinking for a long time of crossing the red frontier. In my red-haired head constructive thoughts are maturing...." And he also wrote: "The Town Hall in Stockholm inspires more respect in me than the Kremlin in Prague...." He called Marx: "An old greedy-guts framed by a wreath of fir-cones." In a letter he wrote: "I should like to spit on Moscow." That's what Brodsky is worth and all who defend him.

The record of the defence counsel's summing-up is missing. Its conclusions were: Brodsky's guilt has not been proved; Brodsky is not a work-shy element, therefore "means of administrative influence" cannot be applied to him. The importance of the decree of May 4th is very

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great; it is a weapon for ridding the city of real work-shy elements and parasites. Its groundless application discredits the purpose of the degree. The decision of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union of March 10th, 1963, makes it the duty of the Court to adopt a critical attitude towards the evidence submitted, not to allow a verdict against those who are working, and to respect the right of the accused to acquaint themselves with the documents of the case and to submit evidence of their innocence. Brodsky was illegally held in custody from February 13th 1964, and deprived of the possibility of presenting a number of pieces of evidence. But even the evidence submitted is sufficient for the conclusion that Brodsky is not a work-shy element.

(*The Court retires for consultation.*)

REMARKS OVERHEARD IN COURT:

"Writers? The whole lot should be kicked out!"

"Intelligentsia? They're a millstone round our necks!"

"But don't the intelligentsia work?"

"Come off it, didn't you see how they work? They exploit the work of others."

"I'm going to get hold of a rough translation and start translating poetry."

"Have you the slightest idea what a rough translation is? Do you know how a poet works with a rough translation?"

"I know Brodsky. He's a good boy and a good poet."

"He's an anti-Sovietist. Didn't you hear what the prosecutor said?"

"Did you hear what his counsel said?"

"The defence counsel was speaking for money and the prosecutor for nothing, so he's right."

"All these defending lawyers want is to earn a lot of money. They don't care what they say, so long as they have money in their pockets."

"You're talking nonsense."

"Don't start getting abusive! I'll call the *druzhinniki* in a minute! Did you hear the quotations they read out?"

"He wrote those ages ago."

"I'm a teacher. If I didn't believe in education, what kind of teacher should I be?"

"We don't need teachers like you. We send our children to school, and what do they get taught?"

"But they didn't even give Brodsky a chance to justify himself."

"It was enough, we heard enough from your Brodsky."

(*Josef Brodsky was condemned to five years' forced labour*)

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LETTERS

Civil Servants, Reply!

In an examination for admission to the Administrative Class of the Civil Service held on April 1st, the Civil Service Commissioners included in the English paper a passage of about 450 words which is adapted from "The View from Miami," by Irving Kristol, published by you in November, 1963 (Volume XXI, No. 5, page 89). The source and authorship are not given in the question paper because of the nature of the question.[1]

When an examination has been held the question papers are usually placed on sale by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in the form of a pamphlet which is solely for the use of candidates intending to take future examinations; but the Commissioners do not wish to include this extract in the pamphlet without your permission. I therefore enclose a copy of the question paper concerned, and I should be grateful if you would give me permission to publish it in the proposed pamphlet. Please indicate in your reply the form of acknowledgment you would wish us to make, and whether any fee is payable for the use of this material.

H. A. Needham
One of Her Majesty's Civil Service Commissioners

London

[1] Question Three.—*Write a rejoinder to the following passage:*

"One of the nice things about not being a great power is that one has a freedom of action that is otherwise prohibited. Unfortunately, British statesmen and spokesmen insist on pretending that this freedom does not exist. It is not that they deceive themselves about their importance. Rather they have ingrained habits—of reasonableness, of civility, of decorum—that are uncontrollable. So they make cautious and prudent speeches at the U.N. which no one pays any attention to, when they could be making outrageously frank speeches that would at least relieve the tedium which is the U.N.'s natural atmosphere and give British diplomacy a style and dash it sadly lacks.

"In domestic matters, if Britain really wishes to avoid becoming a greater Sweden, the one thing it dare not be is boring. Even if they transgress the ideology of 'fair shares,' there are little things that might make life more exciting both for individuals and the collectivity. Like tripling the salaries of all scientists and hiring Americans away from M.I.T.; or whittling away at the progressive income tax and encouraging more people to earn more money; or training some thug to win the world heavyweight championship; or—what I mean is, *do something*. I was disappointed that [**George Brown,** *omitted*] did not become leader of the Labour Party, for I am told that he is an unpredictable man, given to sudden fits of temper and indiscretion—just the sort of leader, it seems to me, that Britain needs at this juncture. I still have some hopes for [**Lord Hailsham,** *omitted*] as a Conservative leader, though they are slowly wilting.

"Imperial Britain was the creation of a small, aristocratic class. It is not fashionable to say anything kind about that class, but the fact remains that the nation it governed meant *something* in the eyes of the world—something quite unique and rather marvellous. Whether the democratic Britain that has emerged since the war—or, if one insists, is emerging—will have any such meaning, is *the* question of British politics to-day. Little England might, in the end, be a perfectly decent place for little Englishmen to live in. For the rest of us, it would signify an irreparable loss."

Intelligentsia

Professor Richard Pipes in his essay on Russian intellectuals [Encounter, January] finds "no pronounced political sentiment in the vast [Soviet] literary output of to-day." He also insists that "the whole attitude" of contemporary Soviet intellectuals, and notably writers, is consciously "anti-political"—as opposed to their pre-revolutionary predecessors. "The Soviet intellectuals are involved in politics not because they want to be, but because the system under which they live interprets every human activity in political terms." It is this point—and the conclusions from it—which I find difficult to grasp in his otherwise admirable and lucid article.

Undoubtedly, there is a strong streak of "apoliticism," of commitment to private life exclusively, in the attitude of some Soviet intellectuals. Among younger writers such names as Kazakov and Akhmadulina stand for it. But is it all? When Evtushenko denounces "Stalin's heirs"—does he not express "pronounced political sentiments?" When Solzhenitsyn in his latest story *For the Good of the Cause* challenges the rule by the Party Secretary as a system of built-in injustice in government—is he being "anti-political"? When Nekrasov protests against the surveillance of Soviet tourists abroad by the secret police—is this political only because the régime does in fact interpret *every* human activity in political terms?

It seems to me that excessive politicalisation of life under Stalin produced not only the contempt for politics and the search for "personalism" (which Professor Pipes describes) but also an almost obsessive concern with politics, sometimes in the same people. Evtushenko is the case in point. And even such a "pure lyricist" as Anna Akhmatova is not an exception. Professor Pipes aptly quotes her verse as a prime example of involvement in politics "not from the creator's design." Yet she is not always this way. Her *Requiem*—published so far only in the West—is openly political. She appoints herself a spokesman for the mute millions of prisoners and for all who loved them, and with unsurpassed power evokes the full horror and tragedy of the Great Purge. This direct concern with politics existed even under Stalin—when most of the *Requiem* was written—and was becoming stronger

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during the first three and a half post-Stalin years I myself spent in Moscow. Since then (judging from quite massive printed evidence) both the scope and the depth of interest in politics in the traditional, non-Soviet sense of the word have grown considerably. The reasons for this are many: the dangers in displaying political attitudes have decreased, political information has become more available, the hopes for political change are running higher than before. In censored literature political feelings find only a muted expression. Underground writers are much more intense and extreme. (The poet Galanskov writes, for instance, in the type-written magazine *Phoenix* (republished in *Grani*, Frankfurt): "Arise! Arise! Arise! Oh, the scarlet blood of mutiny! Arise, and break to pieces the rotten prison of the state.")

I think it is difficult to maintain, as Professor Pipes does, that "the greatest contrast between the contemporary Soviet intellectual and his [pre-revolutionary] predecessor lies in their respective attitudes towards politics. The old intelligentsia had a thorough commitment to politics; the modern seems to shun and even despise it." Rather, the Soviet intellectual has become direct heir to the tradition of "civic-mindedness" and the movement of the oppositional public opinion in the 19th century. The *Novy Mir* group, for instance, even raises the problems common to both epochs: impoverishment of the countryside and the "peasant question"; arbitrary and unjust bureaucratic rule and how to curb it; etc. Evtushenko likes to repeat N. Nekrasov's injunction: *"You do not have to be a poet, but citizen you've got to be. . . ."*

For Professor Pipes, the Soviet intellectual "is no longer the social and political reformer." It is only logical that he appears to him as "the near relative of the 'alienated' intellectual of the West" —evidently in contrast to the sense of "belonging to society" (though not to the "state") before the revolution. Professor Pipes sees the signs of this alienation in the "rebellion against a social and economic order which chokes the intellectual." But is this a normal meaning of "alienation?" And if one were to take the word "alienation" in its more usual sense one can hardly apply it to the Soviet poets, for instance, whose readings in huge halls and stadiums are guarded by extra-strong police forces to prevent dangerous overcrowding and near-riots. (If this is alienation then aren't the Beatles the four most alienated individuals in Britain to-day?) It seems to me that a sense of belonging to "society"—as opposed to the state—has never been stronger among the Russian intellectuals than it is to-day among most of the rebels against totalitarianism.

Professor Pipes says that the ideal of freedom, which these rebels spread, has not fused in the consciousness of powerful social groups with the notion of their self-interest. I think that to an extent it has—with the most important self-interest of those groups which owe their position to Russia's strength and industrialisation rather than to the present political set-up. This interest is, of course, a prevention of a return to Stalinist terror and total insecurity. They have learned the hard way from their own experience that this is where unfreedom leads to. How else to explain the tremendous popularity of those who, as Professor Pipes repeatedly stresses, "uphold and spread liberty as an ideal?" And is it *only* the ideal they uphold? Do they not constantly plead for institutional changes as well: Soviet and intra-Party democracy, strict legality (e.g. the rule of law), etc.

Thus there are two main points in this thought-provoking essay that I would like to see clarified: (1) Why consider that a-political attitudes are characteristic of Soviet intellectuals to-day? One can hardly generalise, but if one were to, the opposite thesis would appear to me more exact. (2) Why regard the Soviet intellectual not even as a social reformer, but as an alienated individual expressing his own social frustrations and an abstract libertarian ideal—when a great deal of evidence indicates that he is a spokesman for very large groups indeed?

DAVID BURG

King's College,
Cambridge

MR. BURG and I seem to understand differently what "involvement in politics" means. To my mind, it is a natural consequence of a belief that political institutions matter, that it is important that affairs of government be directed in a certain way by certain people. I do not discern such an attitude among Russian intellectuals, even those mentioned by Mr. Burg; I am willing to concede that Tvardovsky and the contributors to *Novy Mir* constitute something of a civic-minded group, which in some respects resembles that gathered around Nekrasov's *Sovremmennik* a century ago. However, a protest against excessive police surveillance or against the Stalinist terror is not, *per se*, indicative of a "political" attitude. Rather, it expresses that desire to escape the state of which I have spoken in my article. The poet Galanskov, whose anarchistic lines published in an underground paper Mr. Burg cites, is protesting not against the Soviet Government, but against all governments engaged in armaments and threatening mankind with war. It is worth noting that the paper *Phoenix*, in which this poem appeared, bears a motto beginning, "Write the truth, so that the word may live." A far cry from the typical revolutionary mottoes of the nineteenth century!

I am not clear to which groups Mr. Burg alludes when he asserts that in the Soviet Union the "idea of freedom" has in fact fused with the sense of self-interest "of those groups which owe their position to Russia's strength and industrialisation rather than to the present political set-up." In so far as Russia's strength and industrialisation are intrinsically connected with the political system, I find it difficult to conceive how any social group can challenge the latter without jeopardising the former.

RICHARD PIPES

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"The Verdict on Smoking"

THE ARTICLE by Professor Eysenck on smoking and cancer [ENCOUNTER, August] is certainly stimulating and controversial. Unfortunately, it is also unscholarly, unoriginal, and potentially dangerous.

Two facts call for explanation; the relationship between smoking and lung cancer, and the great increase in the incidence of cancer of the lung. The genetic hypothesis might conceivably account for the first of these facts. It cannot account for the second.

These arguments are so well known that it is not necessary to refer to a learned work. They may be found in an excellent Pelican book by R. J. C. Harris, entitled *Cancer* (page 47, last paragraph).

Recently a surgeon stated that smoking a small number of cigarettes a day was not dangerous. The Editor of the *British Medical Journal* challenged him to substantiate his case, or to retract it.

Professor Eysenck must answer the same challenge. The issue is too important, and too many lives are at stake, for cancer research workers to allow the casual comments of interested amateurs to be put before the public under the guise of informed opinion.

Unless Professor Eysenck can show that the genetic hypothesis can explain all the facts at least as well as the generally accepted assumption of a simple casual relationship, he has placed himself under the strongest possible obligation to admit his error without equivocation.

No doubt he is quite right, when he suggests that the desire to smoke is genetically determined. So, no doubt, is the desire to drive a car too fast. However, the "inference" that fast driving does not cause road accidents will be unconvincing, both to the police and the insurance companies.

OLIVER C. A. SCOTT

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THIS is a serious argument; I wish Dr. Scott would refrain from turning it into a beargarden. How does the anonymous surgeon get into the act, or the fast driver? And why the *argumentum ad hominem*? Cancer research workers are no doubt experts in physiology, medicine, or biochemistry. The argument about smoking, however, is based entirely on statistics, and my own hypothesis is based on genetics and personality measurements. Unless Dr. Scott can claim specialist knowledge in these fields it ill becomes him to call others "amateurs" just because their opinion differs from his. And he might like to remember that the view I put forward was first suggested by Sir Ronald Fisher, the greatest statistician and geneticist of the last fifty years; hardly an amateur in these fields! When direct evidence is adduced regarding the effect of smoking on the gamut of diseases which is supposed to be caused by the cigarette, I shall gladly admit that I am not competent to judge biochemical or physiological evidence; but no such evidence is in fact offered at the moment. Statistical arguments must be judged by statisticians and Scott is indeed right when he says that my article is "unoriginal"; the criticisms of the orthodox medical position which I made had been made many times before by well-known professional statisticians. Were they amateurs too?

Leaving aside the red herrings and the personal arguments and turning to the meat of the letter, we find two things. In the first place, Dr. Scott does not answer any of the criticisms I made of the orthodox argument, nor does he attempt to solve the Yerushalmy paradox. Presumably these arguments, unoriginal as they may be, are too strong to be controverted. In the second place, Dr. Scott raises a rather different point to the one my article was concerned with, namely the great increase in the incidence of cancer of the lung. He does not say in what way this indisputable fact affects my argument. This failure on his part makes an answer rather difficult, as I would have to supply his missing argument as well. I take it Dr. Scott means that the growth in lung cancer is paralleled by a growth in cigarette smoking and that this correlation indicates a causal relationship. However, statisticians are rightly very suspicious of correlations over time, and refuse to consider them seriously as proof of direct causation unless there is strong independent evidence. There is a similar correlation between the increase in lung cancer and the greater urbanisation of the population, or the number of motor cars on the roads; statistically these are just as likely to be implicated as smoking. In 1961 the death-rate per 100,000 from lung cancer was 130 in London and 51 in rural districts, irrespective of smoking; the greater the urbanisation, the greater the death-rate. Perhaps Dr. Scott would like to explain these figures in terms of his theory. The sad truth is that we do not know the answer to the problem of the causation of lung cancer, and Dr. Scott's attempt to suppress criticism by pretending that the orthodox argument condemning the cigarette is beyond cavil must be judged as "unscholarly, unoriginal, and potentially dangerous."

H. J. EYSENCK

London

Sartre & Emile Zola

IN TRANSLATING Jean-Paul Sartre's interview with *Le Monde* (published in your June number), I gave a text amended in accordance with M. Sartre's corrections made in a subsequent letter to the same paper (April 25th, 1962). In order to avoid confusion and for the sake of the record, I feel that it might be of interest to add a translation of that letter itself.

"I wish to thank you for your interview which I have just read. I have rarely seen a more faithful and clearer account remaining at the same time an original reconstruction.

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"However I should like to point out to you two *errata* which, I should hope, might be corrected in a number in the near future. I do not think I said that the theory of the hermetic in Mallarmé was *a piece of stupidity*. If this word escaped me during the informal conversation we had, it appears deeply distasteful to me when I see it written. I believe the hermetic, as a *theory*, to be a *mistake*, that is all. Is it possible to correct this?

"The other point is more serious: I did not say that the attitude of Zola and Gide was the worst of all. Far from that. Moreover, it only appeared belatedly in the one as in the other. As a particular moment. And Zola was not sitting quietly in his armchair when he defended Dreyfus. Quite the contrary. I believe that a writer cannot do better than defend as a writer the causes that seem to him just. I merely find, indeed—as you so well express it—that heroism is not to be won by the pen. My reply would therefore be (to the question: 'Should the writer put his pen at the service of the oppressed?'):

"Yes, but this is the writer's task, and, if he fulfils it as he should, he acquires no merit from it. Heroism is not to be won at the point of a pen."

"With apologies once more for asking you for these two corrections, etc., etc."

Jean-Paul Sartre

The passage concerning Gide and Zola referred to read as follows in the original interview:

"Ah, no! This is the worst attitude of all. The most false, the most naïve. That of a Zola, that of a Gide in his *Voyage au Congo*. To be seated quietly in one's armchair and take up arms for the exploited. Heroism is not to be won at the point of a pen."

ANTHONY HARTLEY

London

Empson and Lawrence

AN approving reference to Professor William Empson is a regular feature of Mr. Christopher Ricks' reviews [ENCOUNTER, May]. But he could surely have selected a passage far less damaging to Empson's reputation than that about *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, where he is at his most unpleasantly and patently unfair. (He could, after all, have made the point about Hemingway without bringing in Empson or Lawrence, or even Pope.) He quotes Empson as saying that "you are supposed to know" Chatterley "has always been spiritually impotent ... from a symbol, that he happened to become wounded in battle." He goes on:

> surely one knows quite well that this is an infantile type of arguing in the author, tirelessly petulant and spiteful, and not unmental in the slightest degree—as artful as a monkey, in fact.

Even if one's reading of the book didn't tell one that this is simply false, one has Lawrence's own account, in *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover* (pp. 123–4 in the Penguin edition):

> I have been asked many times if I intentionally made Clifford paralysed, if it is symbolic. And literary friends say, it would have been better to have left him whole and potent, and to have made the woman leave him nevertheless.
>
> As to whether the 'symbolism' is intentional—I don't know. Certainly not in the beginning, when Clifford was created. When I created Clifford and Connie, I had no idea what they were or why they were. They just came, pretty much as they are. But the novel was written, from start to finish, three times. And when I read the first version, I recognised that the lameness of Clifford was symbolic of the paralysis, the deeper emotional or passional paralysis, of most men of his sort and class to-day. I realised that it was perhaps taking an unfair advantage of Connie, to paralyse him technically. It made it so much more vulgar of her to leave him. Yet the story came as it did, by itself, so I left it alone. Whether we call it symbolism or not, it is, in the sense of its happening, inevitable.

This account reinforces the impression gained from reading the novel (rather than a "symbolic" critic's account of it) that Chatterley's impotence is not a crudely or palpably manipulated symbol, and that the epithets "infantile," "petulant," and "spiteful" simply have *no* application, at any rate to Lawrence.

P. L. ADAMS

University College,
Oxford

Blackness, Whiteness

I WOULD LIKE to express my admiration for the excellent articles on the Negro crisis. I would like, however, to note an apparently unimportant detail in Harold R. Isaacs' "Blackness and Whiteness." Mr. Isaacs quotes from the Song of Songs: "I am black *but* comely." (The same translation occurs in the Dutch Bible.) However, the Hebrew text says: "I am black *and* comely."

Although, of course, sometimes the Hebrew "and" is translated into "but," in this particular case the use of "but" can lead to misinterpretation. The Shulamite maiden is supposed to be a Bedouin, in contrary to a girl of the city. Her sunburned skin indicates her social position. As interpreted by Mr. Isaacs, the translation seems to suggest that at that period there existed a colour discrimination comparable to our present-day problem.

LOUISE VAN SANTEN

Amsterdam

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APOLLINAIRE

MARGARET DAVIES

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AUTHORS

Eugène Ionesco telegraphed us from Paris a year ago, announcing a "new Manifesto." We wired back, but the manuscript was a little while in the coming. He has previously tried to work out his literary philosophy in *Notes et Contre-Notes* (Gallimard, 1962). This new essay is his latest, longest, and most serious effort to state his views on issues that have provoked so many contemporary controversies. The documents in the 1958 debate with Kenneth Tynan, Philip Toynbee, Orson Welles, et al., are reprinted in the American edition of his "writings on the theatre," just published by Grove Press (New York). Four volumes of his plays from *The Chairs* to *The Rhinoceros* have been brought out by John Calder (London), and Penguin Books have also issued a selection. In the "Writers and Critics" series (Oliver & Boyd, London) there is a study of Ionesco by Richard N. Coe.

Ionesco was born in Paris in 1912; his father being Rumanian. From 1925 until the outbreak of World War II he lived in Bucharest. French has always been his first language; the present essay was translated by John Weightman....

William Letwin teaches economic history at M.I.T. He is at present living in London....

Robie Macauley, the short story writer and novelist, is editor of *The Kenyon Review*....

THE remarkable account of the **Josef Brodsky** trial was first published in German by the Hamburg weekly paper, *Die Zeit*....

Christopher Isherwood's new novel, *A Single Man*, from which "The Class on the Campus," is taken, will shortly be published by Methuen....

Julius Gould teaches at the London School of Economics.

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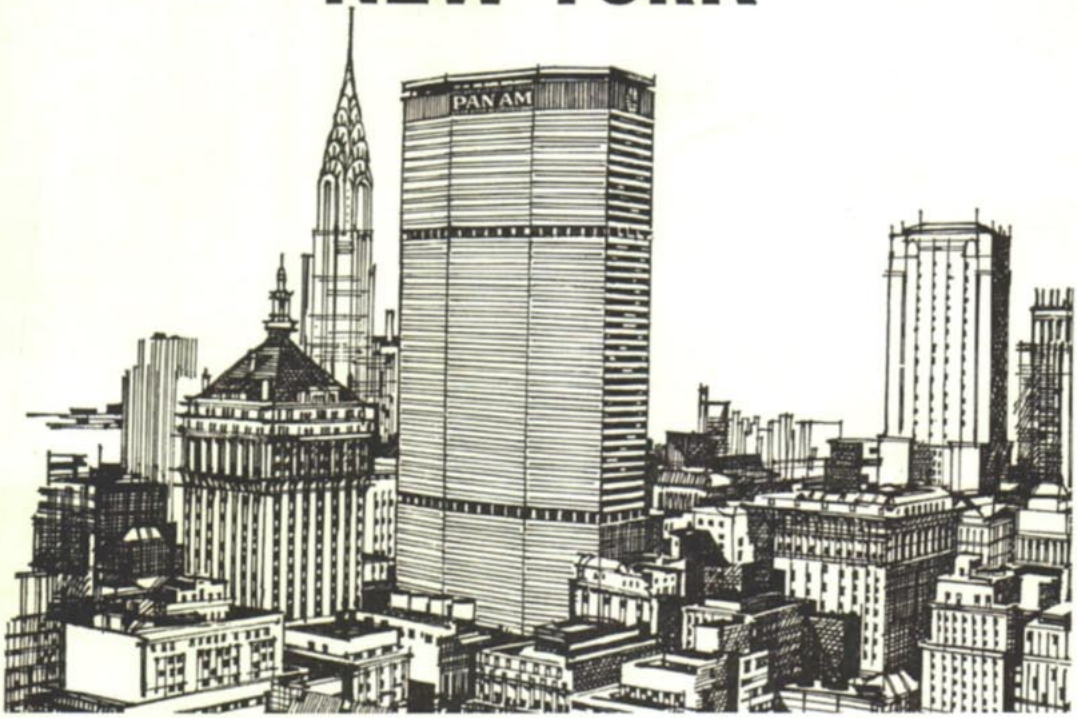

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